









THE ORGAN WORKS  
OF  
BACH



*To*  
*HUGH P. ALLEN*



HANDBOOKS FOR MUSICIANS

EDITED BY ERNEST NEWMAN

---

# THE ORGAN WORKS

OF

BACH

BY

## HARVEY GRACE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY ERNEST NEWMAN.

---

LONDON: NOVELLO AND COMPANY, LIMITED

MADE IN ENGLAND

15133



## INTRODUCTION

---

THIS is, I think, the first systematic and comprehensive English book on the organ works of Bach. It comes from one who is both organist and musician. I hasten to explain. By "both organist and musician" I do not mean what some rude scribes mean when they say of a singer, by way of the highest praise they can give him, that he is not only a singer but a musician. I would never dream of suggesting that there are organists who are not musicians. But it goes without saying that there are musicians who are not organists. I know the tribe exists, because I am a humble member of it myself. My own practical acquaintance with the organ has been limited to the rare occasions when I have sat by an organist friend who has allowed me to let my fingers wander idly over the noisy keys, as somebody's did in the song, and with the same futility. But though I cannot play the organ, I have studied a good deal of organ music : my own knowledge of Bach's organ works, indeed, is derived in the first place from study of them either at the pianoforte or with the score on my knees. There must be many others who have learned them in the same way. But what we learn of them in this way is obviously not all that is to be learned about them. They were written for a particular instrument, and cannot fully come to life except on that instrument.

## INTRODUCTION

The prime value of Mr. Harvey Grace's book is that it appeals both to the organist and to the eager reader of organ works, and will do a good deal to bring together two sorts of people who ought never to have been allowed to separate. That they *have* drifted apart, I make bold to say, is entirely the fault of the organists. I reason from my own experience. From most performances of Bach's organ works by organists I have, I am sorry to say, come away rather disappointed. For one thing, they played so few of them: I used to think of all the others that I knew to be magnificent but never got a chance of hearing on the organ. For another thing, I too rarely felt that the organist had penetrated to the poetry of some of these works,—especially the chorale preludes. I should be the last to indulge in the usual cheap and vulgar sneer at organists as people who know nothing of life outside the organ-loft: I know what fine types both of musician and of man the organ-loft has made. But it has, I think, been too true of many organists that in their absorption in their own special art they have been a little irresponsible to certain other orders of music that lay outside it; and it has always seemed to me that no man can fully appreciate all there is in some of the more poetical organ works of Bach until he has been through a great deal of modern music and come out at the other side of it. Love, as someone has said, is in the lover, not in the beloved. We get out of art precisely what we bring to it; and the richer our own musical personalities have been made by modern music the more riches do we draw from works such as the chorale preludes. We hear a

good deal in these days of Wagner's phrase about the "fertilisation of music by poetry." So far as this means the fertilization of orchestral music, that was undoubtedly the great work of the 19th century. But in the chorale preludes, Bach—pursuing to its final end, as usual, a vein opened out by his less gifted predecessors and contemporaries—was already fertilising music by poetry. The germ of much of Beethoven and Wagner is here. And it is, I think, only a race of musicians that knows its Beethoven and Wagner and Hugo Wolf that is capable of seeing the chorale preludes as they really are. No doubt Bach's friends and pupils thought "*Das alte Jahr vergangen ist*" and "*O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross*" very fine things, but I make bold to say that they had no such idea of the wonderfulness of them as we have who have been through "*Tristan*." The developments of poetic music in the 19th century, in the opera, the symphonic poem, and the song, have sharpened our senses for the poetry of Bach.

I venture to think, then, that one reason for the regrettable severance of organists and ordinary Bach-lovers has been that the latter sometimes felt there was something more in Bach than the organists showed them. But it is obvious that the two types of Bach-lovers cannot remain separated without loss to them both, and particularly to those who are not organists, for they know how much they miss through realising Bach only in the abstract, as it were, without the volume of tone and the colour that his organ music requires. A book such as this of Mr. Grace's should do much to bring the two camps together. It impresses the

non-organist as the work of a man who sees his Bach in relation to all other music, ancient and modern, and it gives him an uncomfortable feeling that his lack of practical acquaintance with the organ shuts him out from a good deal in Bach that the organist has access to. On the other hand, the organist who has been, perhaps, too much inclined to assume that anyone could know all there is to be known about an organ work of Bach by simply playing it through on the organ will meet here with a good deal to extend his knowledge, deepen his insight, and vivify his imagination. The labours of Schweitzer, Pirro, and others have given this generation certain lights on Bach that no other generation since his own possessed. Many of his secrets are in the organ works, but they are not to be unveiled by study of the organ works alone. Only one who knows the whole Bach can really know Bach in this work or that.

This is the book of a worshipper, but not of a blind worshipper. Musical criticism, more than the criticism of any other art, has suffered from uncritical adulation. It is no plaster saint that Mr. Grace shows us, no god walking with unerring step from his first work to his last. Bach, like every other composer, often wrote below his best, and nothing is gained by closing our eyes to the evidences of it. Mr. Grace's frankness towards Bach's lapses inspires confidence in his judgment as a whole. No other book with which I am acquainted gives us so connected a picture of Bach as an organ composer. We are too apt, in dealing with a musician of the distant past, to see his work in a sort of big generalisation, to forget that he must have gone through the same stages of

learning and unlearning, the same alternation of success and failure, as any composer of to-day. Bach, as Mr. Grace shows, had to wrestle like every other musician with a sometimes recalcitrant idea, or contend with a technique that was sometimes too little for its purpose, sometimes too great. The history of art is, in large part, simply the same struggle under ever-changing forms. No man, however mighty his genius, can escape this struggle. All go through the same stages. Slowly and painfully they acquire mastery of the right technique for their particular order of ideas. For a time the two are in perfect equilibrium. Then dis-harmony comes between them : at times the technique becomes a dangerous facility, a blind revolving of the mill wheels without grinding any corn ; at other times some new vision that haunts the background of the artist's consciousness drives him, in a sort of agony, to seek for a new technique, a new balance of thought and language and form.

The attentive reader of Mr. Grace's book will see Bach passing through all these stages. The forms in which he worked seem to us now such complete and, in a sense, such distant things, that only by an effort of the historical imagination can we see them as they must have looked to the artists of that day—as things by no means complete, by no means standardised, and by no means easy, but stubborn things that had to be bent and beaten into shape. Bach was engaged in an endless struggle with his materials and his forms. Both had come down to him from his predecessors with many imperfections ; it was his work to complete what they had been able only to

## INTRODUCTION

sketch. He had to make the ordinary devices of music in his day the servants not only of a musical faculty that was rigorously insistent on logic, but of a poetic faculty that often took lines of its own that were not those the musician, working solely on his own account, would have chosen. The mere necessity of complying with doctrinal demands in the chorale preludes and other works must, as Mr. Grace has shown, have greatly complicated Bach's problem at times. Sometimes he solved the problem, thanks to his unique instinct for organic unity; sometimes it baffled even him. It is only by studying his organ works chronologically that we can realise Bach as he was—not a historical abstraction, a perfect musical machine independent of time and place, but a man like other men, learning his business by hard and often painful work. The student of musical technique, no less than the student of Bach, will learn a good deal from Mr. Grace's book.

ERNEST NEWMAN.

---

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

---

THIS attempt at a study of Bach's organ music is a revised and amplified form of a series of articles that appeared in the *Musical Times* from January, 1920 to August, 1921. Something of the kind seemed to be needed, because the standard books on Bach necessarily covered so much ground that the organist who wished for information on his particular branch of Bach's output had to hunt for it, only to find in many cases a reference so brief as to be of little practical use. Even in the huge work of Spitta some of the most important of the organ works are dismissed in a few lines. Now that the whole of Bach's music is published the time is ripe for detailed consideration of its various sections. This need is especially great in the case of the organ works, because no instrument has developed to such an extent as the organ. As a result, the playing of old organ music raises a host of problems that occur comparatively seldom in the performance of other music of the same period.

Although in the discussion of such points as textual readings, registration, laying-out, &c., various editions will be alluded to, it will be convenient to use one only for general reference. In dealing with the Chorale Preludes, the melodies

and the texts of the hymns are so important that the chosen edition must be one in which these are available. Apparently the only edition answering this requirement is that of Novello (Books XV.-XX., the whole of the chorale melodies and a portion of the text in German and English being given in Book XX.). The references therefore apply to that edition, the number of the book and page being shown in roman and arabic numerals.

No doubt the most convenient method of treatment, both for author and reader, would have been to discuss the works as they appear in the nineteen books of the Novello edition. But a little consideration will show that the adoption of a chronological scheme has advantages that outweigh mere convenience. It sheds a valuable light on Bach's development both as man and composer, and it helps us to a right valuation of the works themselves. There is an obvious and very practical reason why a composer's output should be published without too close an adherence to its chronological order, but the result is apt to do him injustice. For example, in Book X. we find side by side the "Dorian" Toccata and Fugue and a Prelude and Fugue in A minor. The player's first thought is that Bach must have written the latter—a dreary and diffuse affair—on an off day. When he is aware of the place these two works occupy in regard to date he will know that the wide difference in quality is due to the fact that the fine work was written in Bach's prime and the bad one long before he had mastered the technique of composition. When we survey the collection in the light of chronology we are surprised at the rarity with which the mature Bach falls below a high level. Even when

inspiration failed more or less, his technical and intellectual equipment was able to ensure a result that has still a formal interest—sometimes even beauty.

Moreover, a chronological study yields some interesting points that might otherwise escape us. For example, there is the curious disparity between the youthful fugues and the chorale variations written during the same period. In the fugues we see unexpected weakness, whereas the variations abound in touches that link the best of them with the most beautiful of the short intimate preludes written in Bach's maturity. And a knowledge that about forty years passed between the composition of the "Little Organ Book" Prelude on "Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein" and Bach's death-bed treatment of the same melody makes us speculate as to why, in writing the latter, Bach not only adopted the harmonic scheme of the early piece, but even made use of the same four-note figure evolved from the opening phrase of the chorale. Was it by design, or by a trick of the subconscious mind, or have we here one more example of Bach's habit of rewriting movements in which he saw possibilities of improvement?

Again, our interest in the contrast between the naively picturesque methods of the "Little Organ Book" and the greater subtlety and longer flights of the Eighteen Chorale Preludes is heightened by a knowledge that the former was Bach's first important essay in the chorale prelude field and the latter his old age revision of the pick of his output.

I dwell on the importance of studying Bach in chronological order because my experience has been

that a good many problems solve themselves when we go to work in this way.

In his recently published translation of Forkel's "John Sebastian Bach," Prof. Sanford Terry included a collation of the Novello and Peters editions of the organ works. He has kindly allowed me to print this as an Appendix, and I have added references to the Augener volumes. The edition prepared by Schweitzer and Pirro has not been included because only a part of it is at present obtainable, publication having been stopped during the war.

I take this opportunity of saying how much I owe to the numerous correspondents, at home and abroad, who wrote to me during the appearance of the articles. Many of their letters contained valuable suggestions, and all were encouraging. I have also to thank my wife for constant help in the collection and arrangement of material, Miss Marjorie Atkinson for preparing the Index, and Mr. Ernest Newman for a vigilant scrutiny of the final proofs.

*London, April, 1922.*

---

After the following pages had gone beyond recall for correction purposes, I found a few points still calling for a word. How far did Bach walk to hear Buxtehude? Spitta gives the distance as fifty miles—meaning German miles. The English translation also gives fifty miles, but as nothing is said about their being German miles, readers naturally assume them to be English. When in

the *Musical Times* I followed Spitta and Parry, several correspondents pointed out that the distance was really well over two hundred English miles. In the following pages I have corrected the passage accordingly, but, as friends who saw the proof sheets invariably questioned the figure, it seems worth while to mention the matter here and so save future correspondence. Of course the mistake should never have been made, seeing that a glance at a large-scale map of Germany shows Arnstadt and Lübeck to be about two hundred and thirty miles apart. No wonder young Sebastian overstayed his leave! A month's holiday is a short allowance when about four hundred and sixty miles have to be done on foot.

A point in regard to the Toccata in F was not mentioned in its proper place. It is evident that in bars 313 and 314 the R.H. chords should be played an octave higher. Bach had to dodge down here because his manual compass stopped at C. This passage is printed higher in the Augener Edition, and has an optional "8<sup>va</sup> higher" mark in Schirmer. If this reading is adopted the L.H. part should be filled out to correspond with similar passages elsewhere, thus:

Ex. 1.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle staff in bass clef, and the bottom staff in bass clef. The music is in common time. The top staff contains mostly eighth-note chords, primarily E7 and D7, with some sixteenth-note patterns. The middle staff contains mostly quarter-note chords, primarily E7 and D7, with some eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff contains mostly quarter-note bass notes, primarily G, B, and D, with some eighth-note patterns.

Mention should be made, too, of a suggestion in regard to the Fugue following the Passacaglia. In bars 104-106 the counter-subject is badly placed both for convenience and effect. The following modification—the source of which I cannot recall—has a good deal to be said for it:

Ex. 2.

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The top staff begins with a quarter note followed by a half note. It then features a series of eighth and sixteenth note patterns. The bottom staff continues this pattern, starting with a quarter note. The notation is in G minor, indicated by a key signature of one flat, and 4/4 time. The music concludes with the instruction "&amp;c." at the end of the second staff.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION ... ... ... ... ...	V
AUTHOR'S PREFACE... ... ... ... ...	vi
I.—EARLY WORKS ... ... ... ...	I
II.—THE WEIMAR PERIOD ... ...	33
III.—THE SECOND WEIMAR PERIOD ...	77
IV.—THE "LITTLE ORGAN BOOK" ...	107
V.—MORE WEIMAR PRELUDES AND FUGUES ...	144
VI.—THE SONATAS FOR TWO MANUALS AND PEDALS	173
VII.—MISCELLANEOUS CHORALE PRELUDES...	192
VIII.—THE CHORALE PRELUDES IN THE "CLAVIER-ÜBUNG" ... ...	209
IX.—THE LEIPSIC PRELUDES AND FUGUES ...	225
X.—BACH AND THE TRANSCRIPTION ...	247
XI.—THE EIGHTEEN CHORALE PRELUDES ...	263
XII.—REGISTRATION ... ... ... ...	283
XIII.—PHRASING ... ... ... ...	295
XIV.—CODA ... ... ... ...	301



# THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

---

## I.—EARLY WORKS.

It is unfortunate that, in England at all events, the most widely-known of Bach's early organ works are by no means the best. This is due to the fact that until very recently the organ music based on chorales was a sealed book so far as most English organists were concerned. And yet among Bach's youthful efforts are some chorale variations that, by reason of their intrinsic merit and their value as technical material, are far more deserving of attention than certain of the immature preludes and fugues with which so many students begin their study of his music.

Only when we view Bach's organ output as a whole and in chronological order do we realise that until his middle period practically all his best organ music was of the chorale variation and prelude type. The reason for this is obvious: his predecessors had supplied him with a profusion of excellent models of chorale preludes of all kinds, long and short, but none had written a perfect fugue.

## 2 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

The fugal writing of the Northern composers was usually loose and scrappy; that of the Southern composers was too strict. The importance of thematic interest in the subject seems to have escaped both schools, and such vital features as the episode and free discussion and development of the subject matter were merely hinted at, even by the best of the pioneers. They could turn out a page close packed with imitative treatment of a subject of no importance—a fragment of the chromatic scale or a stock phrase—and they could rhapsodise; but the perfect blend of logic and freedom that makes the fugue one of the finest of forms was beyond them. Their waiting on the subject was slavery; their freedom from it, license.

In his Passacaglia, Toccatas, Fantasias, Preludes, and other movements in free form, Bach as a rule merely did what had been done long before, though he did it immeasurably better. It was otherwise with the fugue. He found it an experiment, by turns crabbed and incoherent; he left it a perfect means of expressing almost every mood.

The exact chronology of Bach's organ works (especially the earliest) is uncertain. But we may safely assume that he began his career as organ-composer (as he certainly ended it) by treating a chorale melody. His output during the Lüneburg period (age fifteen to eighteen) seems to have consisted entirely of Chorale Partitas—sets of variations. Two of these—a group of eleven on “Ach, was soll ich Sünder machen?” and another of seventeen on “Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr”—are so weak as to make one question their

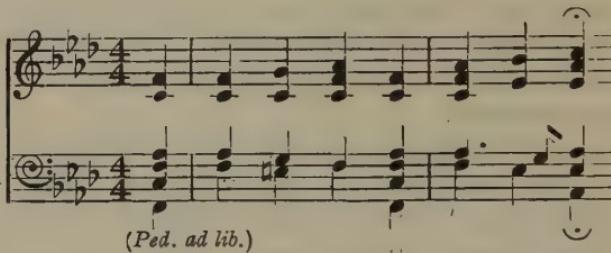
authenticity. Spitta regards the former as genuine, but makes no reference to the latter. He mentions, however, a set of seven variations on "Herr Christ, der Ein'ge Gottessohn" as being almost certainly by Bach, and dating from the Lüneburg days. They were still in MS. in 1880. The two sets first mentioned above are to be found in vol. ix. of the Augener edition.

The only works of this period worth our attention to-day are the Partitas on "Christ, der du bist der helle Tag" ("O Christ, Who art the Light and Day") and "O Gott, du frommer Gott" ("O God, Thou faithful God") (XIX.).\*

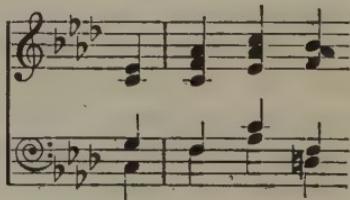
A reliable indication of very early date in Bach's organ music is the almost entire absence of an independent pedal part. Bach's post at Lüneburg was one of general utility—accompanying on the harpsichord at rehearsals, playing the violin in concerted music, and probably acting as assistant choir director, his own singing voice having temporarily disappeared. He had little opportunity for access to the organ, so we are not surprised to find that his first compositions for the instrument—the chorale partitas—are for manuals only, with brief *ad libitum* parts for pedals. That he was at this time more at home with the harpsichord than with the organ is shown by the idiom of these early works, which is clearly that of an instrument deficient in sustaining power. The writing is unequal, but there are so many passages of pure Bach that the best of the variations still make delightful hearing. Curiously, the chief weakness

\* The Partitas on "Sei gegrüsset, Jesu güätig," belong partly to the Lüneburg period. Some of the variations were written at a much later date, and will be discussed in a future chapter.

is in the matter of plain harmonization. For example, here is the first phrase of "Christ, der du bist der helle Tag":



Spitta points out the clumsy effect of the six-part chords on the weak accents, with four-part harmony between. He might also have drawn attention to the lack of harmonic enterprise. In the ten bars we find the tonic chord, in root position, no less than fourteen times! And such clumps of notes as:



hardly suggest the Bach we know.

But the variations as a whole show a grace and polish quite remarkable in an age when the keyboard idiom was still far from defined. We have more than a peep of the real Bach in such passages as the following, with its satisfying two-part writing,

## CHORALE VARIATIONS

5

its little two-note leaning figure in the right hand, and the delightful bit of echo:

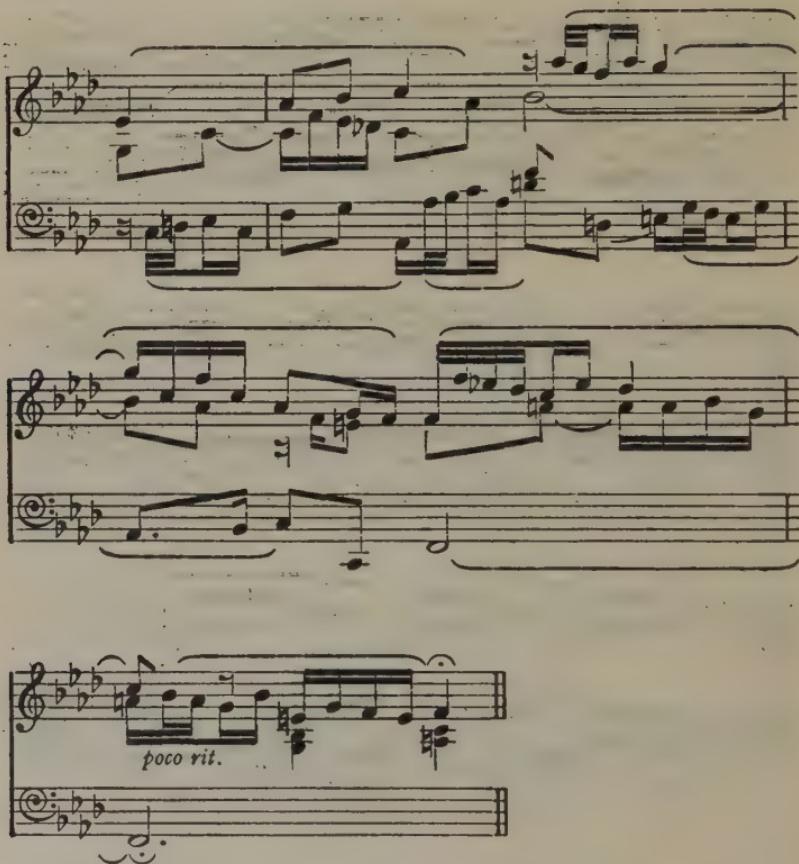
The image displays three staves of musical notation. The top staff consists of two systems of music, each starting with a forte dynamic (f). The first system has a basso continuo part with eighth-note chords and a soprano part with eighth-note pairs. The second system continues with eighth-note pairs. The middle staff shows a soprano part with eighth-note pairs followed by a basso continuo part with eighth-note chords. The bottom staff shows a soprano part with eighth-note pairs followed by a basso continuo part with eighth-note chords. The basso continuo part includes a dynamic marking 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte), and an instruction '&amp;c.' (and so on).

In the third partita we meet with a little figure which was destined to play an important part in some of the best of the Chorale Preludes:



## 6 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

The closing bars of this movement are worth quoting. They might have been written in Bach's maturity :



The final variation gives us an *ad libitum* pedal part which needs treating with discretion. It consists of the chorale melody in crotchets. But as the left hand gives us an ornamental form of the tune in the bass, the pedal part, unless played with very quiet 16-ft. tone alone (uncoupled, of

# CHORALE VARIATIONS

7

course) merely muddles the effect. Played on the pedals attached to the harpsichord the pedal notes quickly ceased sounding, and little or no damage was done. On the whole, the pedal part is best omitted. Certainly the use of Pedal 32-, 16-, and 8-ft. with reeds coupled to Great (as is suggested by some editors), seems indefensible, unless the lower of the left-hand parts is omitted. Here is the first phrase of this variation :

MAN.

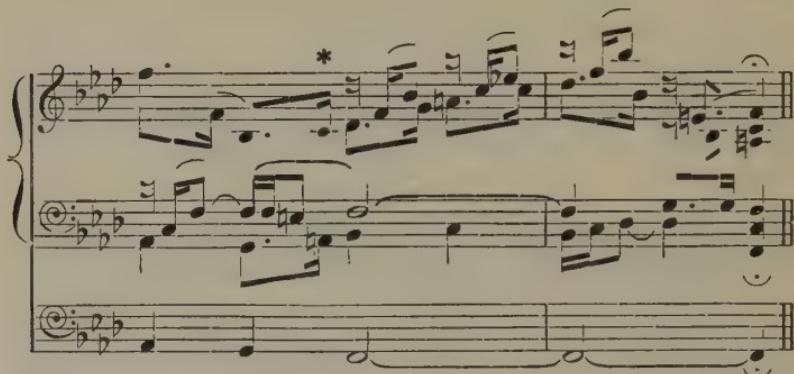
PED. (ad lib.).

&c.

It is worth noting that the number of the variations corresponds with the verses of the hymn, showing that already Bach, like Böhm

## 8 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

and others, was more or less working on a programmatic basis. The connection between the music and the words is less clear than in many of the Chorale Preludes, but it is there. One more passage may be quoted—the final cadence of the last variation, with a daring use of an auxiliary note :



Played at the right slow pace, the fifths and the unexpected touch of the chord of A minor at \* are quite startling, especially if the pedal part be omitted.

Much of what was said above applies to the variations on "O Gott, du frommer Gott." We find the same clumsy method of harmonizing the chorale, and the same graceful writing in the variations. Again the sections are the same in number as the verses—nine. The connection between words and music is of the slenderest, save in sections vii. and viii., where the more expressive character of the music seems to be a fairly obvious reflection of the increase of emotion in the text—a reference to Death and Resurrection.

## CHORALE VARIATIONS

9

No. viii. contains some beautiful writing of the chromatic type which Bach usually adopted when dealing with the idea of death, *e.g.*:

The image displays three staves of musical notation for organ, arranged vertically. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. It features a series of sixteenth-note patterns. The middle staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. It also features sixteenth-note patterns. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. It features sixteenth-note patterns. Brackets above the staves group the measures into three distinct sections. The first section consists of two staves, the second section consists of two staves, and the third section consists of one staff. The notation uses various note heads, stems, and bar lines to indicate the rhythmic and harmonic structure. The final measure of the third section concludes with a repeat sign and the instruction "&amp;c." (and so on).

There is nothing of the 'prentice hand here, especially in such details as the inverted pedal point in bar 3, and the touching together of the E natural and B natural in the last bar.

These Partitas show in a marked degree the influence of Georg Böhm, who was organist at St. John's Church at Lüneburg during Bach's stay. Böhm seems to have imbibed a good deal of the spirit of contemporary French clavecin composers, and no doubt much of the grace of Bach's early keyboard writing is due to French influences received thus at second-hand. To Böhm he certainly owes his trick of beginning each set of variations with a primitive kind of *ostinato*—an idea which bore fine fruit later in the so-called “Giant” fugue, and in several of the numbers of the “Little Organ Book.” The few examples of Bohm's work that survive show him to have been a far more imaginative and decorative writer than Pachelbel, and a more intimately expressive one than Buxtehude. It is but fair that the influence he exerted on Bach should be noted. We shall see a further striking example later.

Imitative as the Partitas are, they are at the same time characteristic. As Spitta says:

“Throughout, indeed in spite of their reliance on an outside model, these chorale variations bear witness to a quite extraordinary talent. They are by a youth of sixteen or seventeen, and what natural beauty they display! What freedom, nay, mastery of the combination of parts! Not a trace of the vacillating beginner feeling his way. He goes forward on his road with instinctive certainty; and though here and there a detail may displease us the grand whole shows the born artist.”

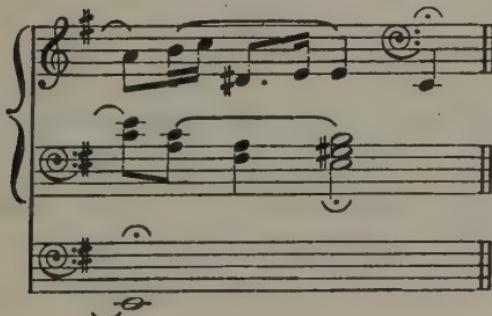
It is possible, of course, that these works may have been considerably touched up at a later period, though the crude harmonization of the

chorales suggests otherwise. The mature Bach would hardly have left such progressions as those quoted in the first two examples.

These Partitas have been discussed rather fully because they are so admirably adapted for technical purposes. They are far more interesting than much of the manual work usually given to students in the early stage. With two well-contrasted manuals and light promptly-speaking stops, they may be made into enjoyable little pieces. The player will get a delightful foretaste of the intimate character that makes the best of Bach's music so vital to-day, and he will also recognise germs from which were to spring some of the mightiest of musical growths.

## §

Two other pieces may be assigned to the Lüneburg period—the Preludes on “Christ lag in Todesbanden”—“Christ lay in death's bonds”—(XVIII., 19), and “Erbarm' dich mein”—“Have mercy upon me, O Lord”—(XVIII., 35). The first was undoubtedly written for a two-manual harpsichord with pedals. If proof be wanted it will be found in the final bar:



The low E given to the right hand was necessary on the harpsichord because the pedal note would have faded away before the closing chord was reached. This prelude begins and ends well, but is spoilt by a long passage in the middle, where a very tame progression of a bar's length is repeated about twenty times.

The little piece on "Erbarm' dich mein" is much more worthy our attention. There is hardly any method of accompaniment more discredited in organ writing than that of repeated chords. This seems to have been recognised very early in the history of organ music, and I can recall no other old example of its use throughout a movement beyond a prelude on "Vater unser" by Böhm and the Bach piece under notice.

The "Erbarm' dich mein" prelude, primitive though it be, is curiously appealing. This is due to the highly expressive harmony, which contains some poignant touches. Spitta admits the "great power of harmony and a deep sympathy with the feeling of the hymn," though he finds the style faulty, and complains of "certain harsh harmonies"—a complaint in which few of us will join. The piece is most effective when the melody is played in the tenor register. The accompanying chords need a very delicate stop if they are not to sound lumpy. They should be as little detached as possible, the result being a steady throb which adds much to the already considerable emotional appeal. Perhaps repeated chords by a string

## 'ERBARM' DICH MEIN" 13

quartet is the effect to aim at. Here is the opening strain:

= 50.

*Solo stop.*

*p*      *simile.*      *p*

*&c.*

*&c.*

The suggested pace is perhaps a trifle too slow.

## §.

Considerable impetus was given to Bach's work as organ composer by his appointment at the age of eighteen to the post of organist at Arnstadt. Here he had a newly-built two-manual instrument with the following specification :

Oberwerk (Upper manual)	ft.	Brust-positiv (Choir)	ft.
1. Principal ( <i>i.e.</i> , Diapason) ..	8	1. Principal ..	4
2. Viola da gamba ..	8	2. Lieblich gedackt ..	8
3. Quintatön ..	16	3. Spitz flute ..	4
4. Gedackt ..	8	4. Quint ..	3
5. Quint ..	6	5. Sesquialtera ..	
6. Octave ..	4	6. Nachthorn ..	4
7. Mixture ..	4 ranks	7. Mixture ..	1-ft., 2 ranks
8. Gemshorn ..	8		
9. Cymbal ..	1 ft., 2 ranks		
10. Trumpet ..	8		
11. Tremulant ..			
12. Cymbelstern ..			
		Pedal Organ	
		1. Principal ..	8
		2. Sub-bass ..	16
		3. Posaune ..	16
		4. Flute ..	4
		5. Cornet ..	2

No. 12, according to Dr. Eaglefield Hull ("Organ Playing," p. 219), was a set of tuned bells.

Severe people who regard the tremulant as a modern kickshaw, and unfit for use in the music of Bach and other old composers, will have a shock when they see it in the above list. We may be sure that Bach made use of it, too. Did he not, when drawing up the scheme for the restoration of the Weimar organ, stipulate that the pedal glockenspiel (a set of twenty-four bells) should be put in order? One who swallowed the camel of a carillon was not likely to strain at the gnat of a tremulant. On the contrary, he was sufficiently appreciative of the device to be anxious for a good one. In his statement on the Weimar scheme we find him pointing out that "the tremulant must be so put right that its action may be regular."

It is futile to object to the use of any modern stops or accessories on the ground that "Bach would not have used them." Evidence on the point is scanty, but what we have shows Bach to have been not only an enthusiastic expert so far as the mechanical side of the organ was concerned, but also a player who made the most of the resources at his disposal. This point will be discussed more fully when we come to consider the few works in which we have his own directions as to registration.

The first of the Arnstadt compositions to call for attention is the well-known Prelude and Fugue in C minor (II., 48). The faults of the work are obvious, but it is still sufficiently effective to deserve playing, even by those of us who have left the pupil stage far behind. It is just the kind of work we should expect from a youngster let loose on an organ for the first time. The ponderous pedal solo, followed by long notes over which four parts disport themselves, the weighty repeated chords at bars 20 and 24, and the section of the fugue following the belated pedal entry—all these rather primitive features show the composer revelling in abundance of sound. We may imagine the ancients of Arnstadt shaking their heads, and complaining that the new organist was a noisy young fellow.

The Fugue is lamentably weak. It is even amusing to see how Bach, having announced the subject, low in the keyboard, brings in the next four entries at the top, the whole structure rising high and dry (especially dry) with both hands well up in the treble stave. Note, too, that he is unable to get away from the tonic and dominant when

## 16 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

making an entry. How far Bach had yet to go before mastering the fugue form is shown not only by these naive methods, but also by his inability to continue the polyphonic web when the subject is in the bass. On the first occasion he is content with two-part writing of a rather fidgety quality; the second time he essays three parts with only moderate success, the first bar giving us a weak treble of repeated notes, with an Alberti tenor for stuffing:



The third bass entry is in the pedal, and here, with both hands at liberty, he makes no attempt at counterpoint, but boldly lets himself go with big chords, some of them of the "chopstick" variety, rounding the work off with a capital bit of bravura writing. There was probably a technical reason for his primitive treatment of the theme when in the pedals. As we have seen, Bach had so far had but little opportunity for organ practice, and was naturally far more proficient on the manuals than on the pedals. He had reached the stage when a fairly showy pedal solo had no terrors, whereas a quick pedal theme, accompanied by two or three independent counterpoints, was beyond him. We find him writing no really difficult passages of this type until near the end of his stay at Arnstadt, when we may assume the Fugue *alla giga* and the four-movement Toccata and Fugue in C (or E) to have been composed.

With all its imperfections, this C minor work shows Bach already drawing away from his older rivals in several important respects. The pedal solo has far more significance than such things were wont to possess, and the Prelude as a whole, thanks chiefly to the use of the opening figure of the solo, has none of the rambling diffuseness that we find too often in Buxtehude, and occasionally in Bach himself during his first period. The cadenza at the end of the Fugue is also a marked improvement on contemporary passages of the kind. But the greatest advance is to be found in the subject, one of the most delightful Bach ever wrote—of the lyrical type, that is. Hitherto composers had attached little importance to the thematic side of fugal writing. Almost any series of notes seemed good enough for a subject. Born melodist that he was, Bach from the first rarely wrote anything but good subjects. His weakest are far ahead of such wretched scraps as these of Buxtehude, chosen almost at random :

The image contains three musical staves, each labeled with a lowercase letter in parentheses: (a), (b), and (c). Each staff is in G major (one sharp) and consists of two measures. Staff (a) starts with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note pair. Staff (b) starts with a quarter note followed by a sixteenth-note pair. Staff (c) starts with a quarter note followed by a sixteenth-note pair.

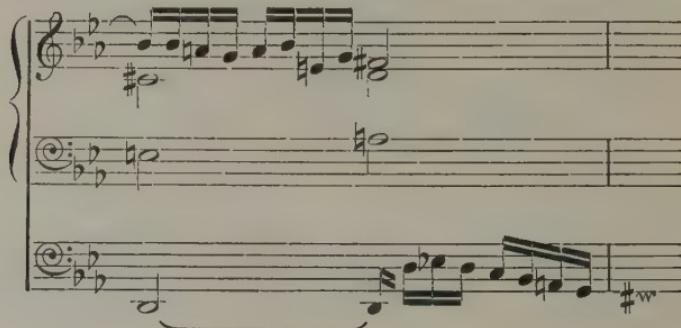
Before leaving this work, a word may be said as to the registration of the closing passage. Most editions suggest a *diminuendo*, with diapasons only for the last chord. This method gives an impression

## 18 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

of calm after storm, and there is something to be said for it. But a far finer effect is obtained by playing the cadenza in the last four bars on the full organ without the Great reeds, bringing these on at the final chord. Let the building-up of this chord be deliberate, regardless of discords. There is a splendid note of triumph in the ending, managed thus. Some editors bring the pedal in with the low G at the end of the last bar but four, instead of reserving it for the E natural :

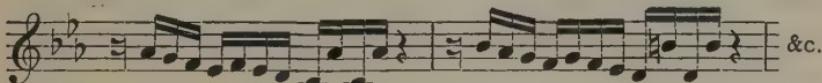


This is a good plan, provided the whole bar is slowed up, and the F and G played very deliberately. It may be added that the Augener and Schirmer editions give the semiquaver passage in the left hand of bar 2, page 49, to the pedal, thus :



This work has been dwelt on at far greater length than it deserves, judged on its actual merits. But it has seemed worth while, because the music throws a very interesting light on Bach's development. Moreover, of all his very early fugues, this is almost the only one worth playing to-day. It well deserves its popularity with students who are just "finding their feet"—as Bach was when he wrote it.

Much less satisfactory is another fugue in C minor (XII., 95) usually included among Bach's works, though it is now generally ascribed to his son Emanuel. Grieppenkerl does not question its authenticity, his only doubt being whether it was composed for clavichord or organ. Widor and Schweitzer omit the fugue from their edition. Its long subject opens in an arresting manner:

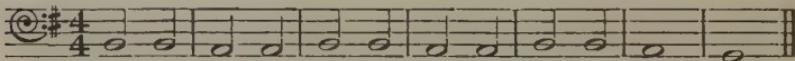


and the work contains a good deal of very spirited writing and not a few delightful harmonic touches. But the contrapuntal interest is small, and the general effect thin. Observe, too, the lack of resource shown in dealing with the crotchet rests in the subject. The composer hits on a happy idea at the start, filling them in with a figure which seems like an answer to the abrupt ejaculation of the subject. But he seems unable to get away from it, and the bright repartee that begins by pleasing ends by irritating, as would any other repartee after so much repetition. The use of the pedal is very weak. It enters for the final twelve bars, and even then has nothing relevant to say, though the general

effect of the *Coda* is good. On the whole, however, we shall not miss much if we pass this fugue by in our studies.

§

Only two pieces on Chorales appear to have been written at Arnstadt—a lengthy Prelude on “Wie schön leuchet der Morgenstern” (“How brightly shines the morning star”) (XIX., 23), and a short one on “Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten” (“If thou but suffer God to guide thee”) (XIX., 22). The first is fluently written on the whole, but says nothing of any importance. It breaks down badly half-way, giving us a good deal of feeble, broken arpeggio in place of the satisfying counterpoint with which it began. This is partly due to the weakness of the fifth phrase of the melody when used as a bass. Even Bach in his mature days could have done little with such a bass as this :



But the mature Bach would have been too wise to try. He would have made an inner part of it, and then done wonders round it.

The other Prelude survives in two versions, and is of little importance musically. The longer of the two is of interest on personal grounds because, according to Spitta, it appears to be a specimen of the kind of thing that led the authorities to charge Bach “with having been in the habit of making surprising variations in the chorales, and intermixing divers strange sounds, so that thereby the congregation were confounded. If, in the future,”

they added sternly, “he wishes to add some *tonus Peregrinus*, he must keep to it, and not go off directly to something else, or, as he had hitherto done, play quite a *tonum contrarium*.” Only the short form of this piece appears in the Novello edition (XIX., 22). The longer will be found in Peters (V., vi.), and in Augener (X., 1308). Young Bach evidently took reproof badly, for a further complaint says, “The organist, Bach, used to play too long preludes, but after this was notified to him by the Herr Superintendent, he went at once to the opposite extreme, and has made them too short”—a little touch that makes us organists feel that John Sebastian was indeed one of us.

But the chief ground of complaint was on the score of neglect of duty. Bach had obtained four weeks’ leave of absence in order to visit Lübeck, whither he was drawn by the fame of Buxtehude. It is a pleasant picture, this—young Sebastian, with a year’s savings in his pockets, setting off to walk well over two hundred miles to sit at the feet of one who to-day shines only by the light thrown on him from his disciple. Unfortunately Lübeck proved so interesting that by the time Bach reported himself at Arnstadt the four weeks had run into four months, and when asked to account for his truancy he could only reply—rather lamely—that he had hoped his deputy would prove satisfactory.

This Lübeck pilgrimage was a momentous event in Bach’s life. It led to strained relations with the authorities, and so probably hastened his departure. Far more important, however, is the fact that it provided a powerful stimulus to organ composition, and exerted a marked influence on his style for many years—not entirely for good, as we shall see.

## §

Bach's early shortcomings as a fugal writer are most fully exposed in the long work in A minor (X., 208). It bears obvious traces of Buxtehude's influence, especially in its looseness of structure and thematic poverty. We are so accustomed to find Bach improving on his model, that we get something like a shock when he falls short of it, as he certainly does here. The work consists of an introduction, a fugue, an interlude, a second fugue on two subjects, and a lengthy *Coda* in the style of the opening. Such a chaotic scheme can be made tolerable only by first-rate subjects, well treated; and it must be confessed that for once Bach's inventive powers are unequal to the occasion.

To make matters worse, the second fugue has no connection with what has gone before. Apparently Bach realised too late the need for unity, and tried to save the situation by rounding off the work with a *Coda* in the style of the opening. But the material in both cases is too vague to make any impression, and the result is a work which must be regarded as a complete failure—a long effort with no redeeming feature.

Almost as bad is the Fantasia and Fugue in the same key (XII., 60). Its one good point is the excellent subject of the fugue :

The Fantasia is mere passage-work of the most desolating description; the Fugue sticks badly at times, and gives us thin passage-work where we expect to find episodes. To crown all, when the Fugue is over Bach reels off about forty bars of *cadenza* as uninteresting as the fifty with which he began.

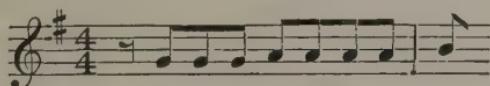
Weak, too, though in a different way, is the Fugue in D (XII., 83). Far too much use is made of a sequence that was probably well-worn even before the youthful Bach found it handy as a stop-gap.

Much better is a Fugue in G (XII., 86), which, in spite of some complacent padding, maintains the naive freshness promised by the subject:



The Prelude in C which follows is usually ascribed to this period, but its style, the use of the pedal, and the material of bars 24-27 (especially in the way the chord of the augmented sixth is introduced and laid out) seem to point to a much later date. Is it by Bach? There is a strong flavour of the Krebs and Kittel tribe, especially in the last dozen bars.

Two Fantasias, both in G, and both consisting of three sections, also belong to this period. The simpler—and apparently earlier—of the two (XII., 75), deals with a subject of Kuhnau—though it seems odd to speak of ownership in the case of such a simple series of notes as:



This is treated with a thin kind of fluency for seventy-one bars—which is about thirty too many—a full close on B leading to a brief *Adagio* in E minor on an inversion of the theme.

The third part of the work is the only one that is worth the player's attention. It is an effective *Allegro*, treating in Chaconne fashion a descending scale-passage of six notes. The writing is flowing and vigorous, and the movement makes a capital voluntary, especially where there is an ample pedal organ on which the theme can stalk with plenty of weight. It is a pity that this *Allegro* seems to be overlooked by teachers. It is one of the best of the early works for technical purposes.

The other Fantasia is the well-known work with the five-voice middle section (IX., 168). It opens with twenty-eight bars of *bravura* for the manual. Such passages are usually an infliction on all save the player, but the one under notice has far more than average interest because of its coherence and the clearness with which it suggests a natural and effective harmonic scheme. How are we to register it? The Novello edition suggests soft 8-ft. and 4-ft. Choir stops—a safe plan. Augener advises the use of full Swell without reeds, going on to the Great 8-ft. and 4-ft. a few bars before the *Grave*. The Schirmer edition gives foundation stops and mixtures on two uncoupled manuals, with a very complex system of manual changes to bring out the “natural echo effects in the music itself.” The player is recommended to change at every bar from 1 to 18, “playing the odd measures on the Great organ, the even measures on Choir or Swell, and striking the first note of each even measure on both Great and subsidiary manual together.”

In measure 19 we are told to change between the even and odd quarters. Surely this is over-doing things! A skilful use of the swell pedal can do a lot for those "natural echo effects" without disturbing the rapid flow which is clearly the first requirement. These Widor-Schweitzer suggestions are evidently based on the assumption that pace is not the thing to be aimed at, for a note says: "Do not be seduced by the *très vitement* into playing the wonderful passages in the Introduction too fast." But Bach so rarely employs terms of this kind that when he does they mean a great deal. Better advice would be: "Do not be seduced by complicated registration into disregarding Bach's plain desire for a very lively pace. Rattle it off as fast as your fingers and the acoustical properties of the building will allow."

The *Grave* is perhaps best played with plenty of diapason tone at the start, adding from time to time until the full power is brought on at the final discord. We should make the most of the splendid rising pedal scale of two octaves beginning at bar 129, adding pedal reeds or even coupling a powerful stop from the solo manual. If we have no reeds we may bring the left foot on to the DD at bar 136 and play octaves until the top D. No matter if the mounting bass kills the manual parts for a few bars as it reaches its climax. We may regard this passage as an early hint at a fine modern effect—a theme apparently of no importance gradually emerging from the background and dominating the situation. (A splendid example in organ music is to be found in Franck's Choral in E, wherein what appears to be a mere pendant to the group of themes with which the

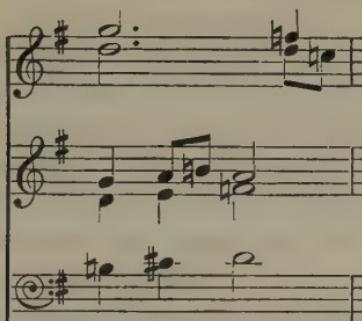
work opens gradually takes the upper hand. As Franck said of it, "You will see the real Choral grow out of the work.")

The *Grave* contains some fine polyphony, though it is a good deal less mature in style than some writers appear to find it. We have only to compare its five-part writing with that of the "St. Anne" fugue, or the Fantasia on "Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist" in the "Clavierübung" (XVI., 33), or with the six-part "Aus tiefer Nöth" (XVI., 68), to see what a long way Bach had yet to go before attaining easy mastery in such things. In this early work the parts too often run into one another, and such details as this tenor flourish:



are not only out of the picture, but, being in an inner part, are ineffective and merely confuse the issue. Moreover, the young composer had not yet learned the importance of resting a voice. In keeping the five going without break he is not always able to give each one something worth saying.

There is a small textual matter calling for note. Bar 110 appears in the Novello edition as:



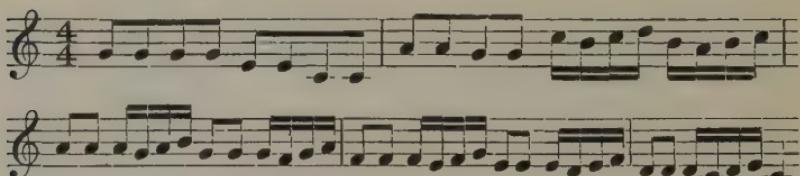
Peters and Schirmer give B natural bass and B flat alto. The Augener edition does the same, but hedges by putting a flat in brackets over the bass B natural. Common practice in the treatment of the sixth of the minor scale, ascending and descending, points clearly to the bass being natural and the alto flat.

The cadenza with which the Fantasia closes calls for louder treatment than the opening; but here again we must be guided by our organ and building. Parry says the series of chords here presented is "rather obvious." It may be so, but in the laying-out of the arpeggios and the use of auxiliary notes the passage is surely far ahead of anything of the kind in contemporary work. Good as these bravura sections are, however, they are so dwarfed by the *Grave* as to seem impertinent. It is a pity we do not play this great middle part alone as a voluntary. All we have to do to make it complete in itself is to substitute a tonic chord for the discord at the end. We then have a noble monologue which will arrest the departing faithful,

whereas the *très vitement* opening will merely hurry them, besides being much too light-hearted for use immediately after a service.

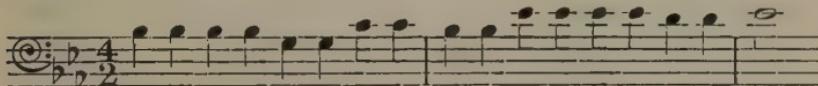
The long four-movement work in C\* (VIII., 88), sometimes called Toccata, is curiously disappointing, although it shows no small advance in grasp of form and in the technique of writing. Bach has again gone to Buxtehude for a model, and the construction is on approved lines—a free prelude, a fugue, and a second free passage, leading to a new fugue on a derivative of the subject of the first. The preludial matter is good enough in its way—a mixture of big chords, suspensions, and manual passage-work: the kind of thing the organists of that day improvised readily enough, no doubt. When the pedal becomes animated it shows Bach still not quite comfortable in writing for it. Not till he had assimilated Italian influences did he consistently write those flowing pedal parts that still delight us—basses which owe much to the strings and very little to the northern organ composers, who hardly ever got beyond zigzag versions of the scale and simple passages based on the arpeggio of the common chord.

The chief disappointment in this work is the first fugue. The subject has two bad faults: it is too long and it is monotonous:

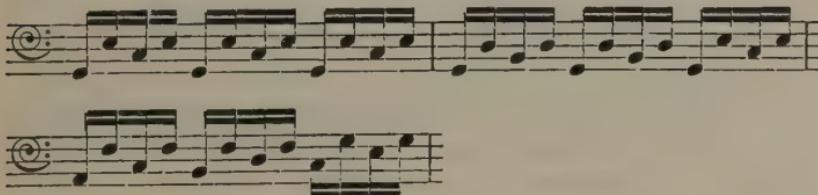


\* It appears also in E, but there seems to be little doubt that C is the original key.

Compare this inane amb'ing down the scale with the brief, pregnant themes from which the later Bach developed some of the greatest things in music. The little semiquaver twirl becomes a sore trial as the fugue goes on—its seven times at each appearance of the subject seem almost like seventy times seven. A good deal of monotony is due to the limited key scheme. Of the twelve entries of the subject, only one is not in the tonic or dominant, and even that does no more than venture into the relative minor. The chattering, repeated notes at the beginning of the subject are a northern convention to which we shall find Bach sticking more or less until his maturity. We may be thankful that he dropped it in time to save us from a "St. Anne" fugue beginning :



There is some charm about the final fugue of this work, but it is thinly spread, and we have a dreadful drop into inanity at the *Coda*. Such a pedal solo as :



is enough to qualify any movement for the shelf.

Unfortunately for Bach's fame, too many players and teachers cannot, or will not, see the

poverty of the work as a whole. Perhaps they too readily swallow the laudatory opinion of Spitta, who calls it "all but a perfect masterpiece." The editors of the Novello edition go even farther, including it in the same volume with the "Wedge," the great Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, and two other of the best works, and speaking of the group as "five of Bach's masterpieces." Parry is more critical, finding the first fugue subject "very long and rather monotonous," and the figures of the bravura passages "rather mild and commonplace." Both fugues, especially the second, "are wanting in decisiveness of personality." Mr. Heathcote Statham throws an interesting sidelight on the curious esteem in which the work has been held in England. He tells us that the Bach Society, when arranging their first festival in the composer's honour, ignored the organ works. On public protest being made they included one, the choice falling on this immature specimen! Mr. Statham says that a well-known musician who was with him at the concert told him that when he was studying in Germany his teacher advised him to neglect the work, as it was not worth serious attention.\*

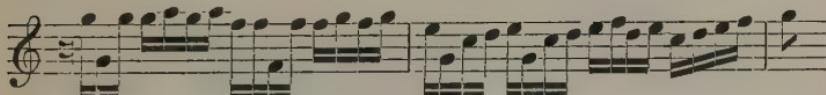
This unhappy choice of the Bach Society helps us to understand how the words "Bach" and "Fugue" were until lately regarded as synonyms for dulness. And if these pages seem to insist overmuch on the faults of the early works, it is by way of protest against our uncritical attitude towards Bach as toward other classical composers. It is still easy to find young organists reaching the end of their pupillage knowing little or nothing

\* "The Organ and its Position in Musical Art," page 98.

about the most subtle and individual of all Bach's works—the Chorale Preludes. They have spent precious hours grinding at such dull and immature works as the one we have been considering—works containing no technical material that cannot be found elsewhere in abundance, and which bear pretty much the same relation to the composer's representative output as Beethoven's Sonatina in G minor does to the "Appassionata." Art is so long, and life so short, that we ought not to spend time studying anything but the best. Every time we are influenced by the name on the title-page rather than by the music within, we do an injustice to ourselves, to the composer, and to some other composer whose more worthy work is thereby pushed aside.

## §

The Prelude and Fugue in C in Book VII., page 74, is another work that has more performances than it deserves. It opens with one of the worst pedal solos ever written—bar after bar of C major arpeggios. Things improve when the manuals get going, but it is all very primitive. The fugue contains some vigorous writing, and there is a general atmosphere of high spirits induced by the heavily-playful subject



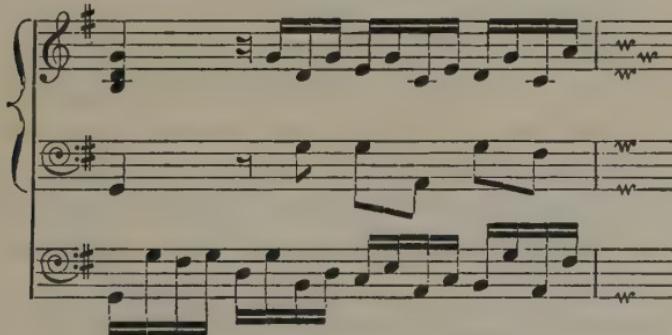
and a good deal of its treatment. But, on the whole, the pupil can easily find elsewhere in Bach's organ works, and specially in the Chorale Preludes, work of a corresponding degree of difficulty and of

infinitely greater value as music. It is amusing to note that Spitta, after speaking of the "massive character of the chords, the effective and brilliant close, and the freedom of the part-writing," says that "the effect of this work when well played, and upon an organ of adequate power, is quite extraordinary. Throughout we hear the roar of the wind, as in a stormy night of March, and we feel that such power is irresistible."

Roughly speaking, we may say that Bach's 'prentice period ended with the works we have so far dealt with. In 1707 he went to Mülhausen, where he stayed about a year before accepting the offer of a post at the Court of Weimar. Here he remained nine years, during which period he wrote a group of his most brilliant and popular works.

## II.—THE WEIMAR PERIOD.

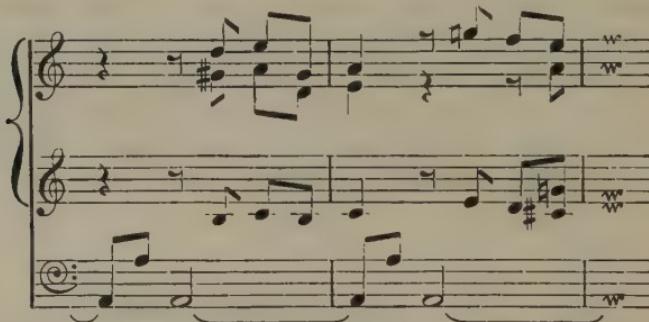
One of the earliest of the works written at Weimar was probably the Prelude in G (II., 30). It is of very little value, though not ineffective when played with plenty of pace on a big organ. The thematic interest is of the slightest. We are given plenty of scale-passages, sometimes in sixths, alternated with big chords over a conventional zigzag pedal. The writing, laying-out, and management generally show some advance on previous efforts, though here and there Bach does not quite know what to do with the left hand, and ends by giving it some puerile figuration, or a mere duplication of the pedal. Such writing as this, for example:



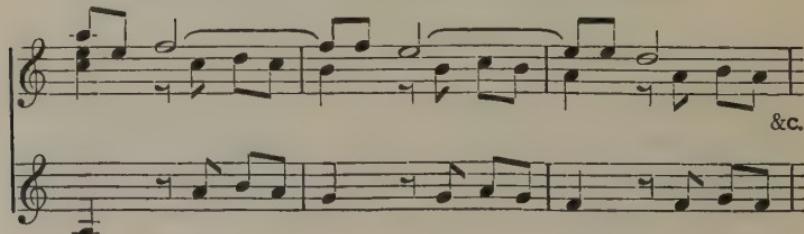
is clumsy, very uncomfortable for the young player, and gives poor value for the trouble it involves. The Prelude contains a liberal allowance of double pedal, though only long-held notes are used. Spitta

says that the chief motive behind this piece "was the setting free of a tumultuous flood of sound in which the impetuous spirit of the young composer revels with delight." But it must be confessed that the flood is too frequently dammed to be overwhelming. The occasional bars wherein we suddenly relapse into crotchet movement remind us that a lengthy *moto perpetuo* was as yet beyond Bach.

We find him getting a bit nearer the mark in the Prelude in A minor (X., 238). Here he sets out to exploit a little rhythmical figure :



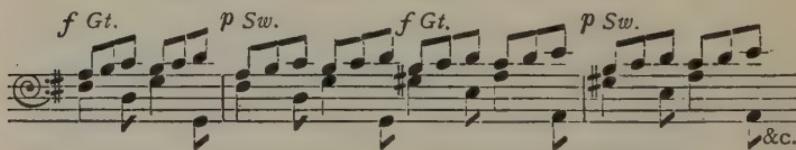
and does it so thoroughly that it becomes boring. It is present in all but a very few of the hundred and fifty bars the piece contains, and the result is too often less interesting than the passage quoted. For example, we have this very tame sequence :



worked again and again. The leaping pedal is effective—indeed the pedal part altogether is a great improvement on any we have met with so far. It shows us that Bach was beginning to realise the necessity for giving the feet a part as individual and important in its way as that allotted to the hands. He even launches out into a real double pedal passage at the end—not an affair of sustained octaves, but a moving part for the right foot over a stationary left. It is but a short flight, five bars in all, but is an interesting foreshadowing of the dramatic passage at the end of the D major Prelude. This A minor Prelude, like some other early works, is apparently held in far higher esteem than it deserves, being far too often played at recitals and included in examination syllabuses. Parry surprises us by describing it as "attractive," though even the enthusiastic Spitta admits that "the effect of the rhythm, continuous throughout, and of the same quietness, is at best, however, somewhat monotonous."

A work far more deserving of Parry's adjective is the Fugue in G in 12-8 time, usually known as the "Jig" fugue (XII., 55)—very probably composed for a two-manual cembalo, with pedals. Spitta seems to regard it as having been written before the Weimar period, and ascribes it directly to the influence of Buxtehude. Certainly it has a good deal in common with the older composer's Fugue in C major and with the final section of his Fugue in E minor, both of which are in 12-8 time.

But the technique of the Bach work is good enough to warrant the conclusion that the composer had been at Weimar two or three years when it was written. The pedal part alone is, as usual, a pretty safe guide. Here it has the importance and consistency that we expect from the mature Bach. The only signs of inexperience are the episodes, which consist of very poor sequential passages. These may be made fairly tolerable by the use of alternate manuals, thus:



There may be the best of authorities for this treatment, for the manuscript contains *piano* and *forte* indications, though whether they were written by Bach or by a later hand is uncertain.

There is a tendency among some strict players to regard echo effects of this kind as modern claptrap, whereas they belong to an early period in the development of organ playing. At a date when mechanical aids to registration were few and clumsy, a player who wished to obtain variety would naturally depend a good deal on the antiphony of well-contrasted manuals. The early French organ composers were specially given to this kind of thing. In the following extract from a "Dialogue" we find André Raison

(1650?-17-?) ringing the changes on four keyboards :

*Allegro.*

The musical example consists of two staves of music. The top staff begins with a forte dynamic and contains five measures. The first measure has a stop labeled 'Gt.'. The second measure has a stop labeled 'Ch.'. The third measure has a stop labeled 'Sw.'. The fourth measure has a stop labeled 'Echo.'. The fifth measure has a stop labeled 'Gt.'. The bottom staff begins with a forte dynamic and contains three measures. The first measure has a stop labeled 'Sw.'. The second measure has a stop labeled 'Echo.'. The third measure has a stop labeled '&c.'.

The original directions are "Grand," "Petit," "Cornet," and "Eco." With a minim as the unit, and the time *allegro*, this passage requires neat handling.

If the old Germans were as a rule less enterprising, it was no doubt because their works were almost invariably fugal, or concerned with a chorale, and in both cases rapid manual changes would play but a small part. The early French writers usually wrote small pieces in free form, and set great store by manual contrast and solo stops. But even a fugue could not repress some of them. I cannot resist the temptation to quote a delightful passage

from a little three-voice fugue for manuals only by this same Raison :

The Choir and Great suggestions are Guilmant's, and represent the "Dessus de Trompette" and "Jeu doux" of the original. One does not expect to come upon such a piquant piece of dialogue in the course of a fugue.

On the whole we need never hesitate to play all such episodical passages as those in the "Jig" fugue on two manuals. It can hardly be doubted that many of them owe their origin to the effective variety easily provided by two contrasted keyboards.

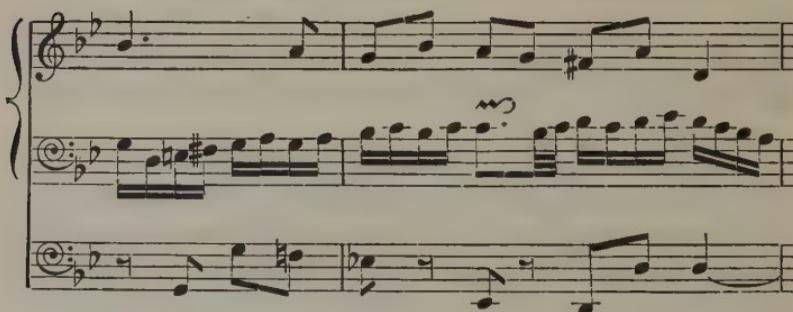
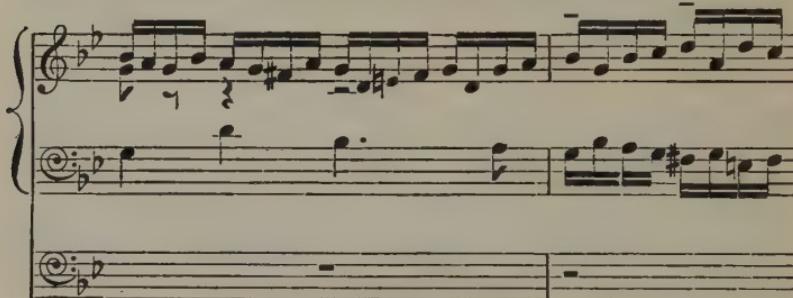
As we know, Bach's work at Weimar brought him into contact with a good deal of Italian chamber music, and the "Jig" fugue probably owes more to the old Italian string composers than to Buxtehude or any other organ writer. We shall see many traces of this influence a little

later. In this particular example it shows itself no less in the form than in the clear-cut springing idiom. The Italians were far ahead of the rest of the world in form, as in most other musical matters. Had Bach not played a good deal of their chamber music he would probably have spoilt the "Jig" fugue by interpolating some bravura passages after the Buxtehude manner. Despite the weak episodes, this fugue is well worth playing to-day. It demands bright and promptly-speaking stops rather than power, and makes its effect best in a building not too large or resonant. If we think of it as chamber music and treat it accordingly we cannot go far wrong. And if our instrument or technical limitations will not allow us to play it at the lively pace it obviously demands, we should leave it alone. The nearer we can get to  $\text{♩} = 100$  the better.

Undignified? Yes, for Bach is frankly at play here. We can no more make this dance-scherzo dignified by playing it slowly than we can make the "Little E minor" merry and bright by playing it quickly.

Another example of youthful high spirits is the "Short" G minor fugue (III., 84), which clearly belongs to this period. It is one of the most popular of all Bach's works, and deservedly so, in spite of the fact that it is a long way from being a first-rate example of the form. Its faults are so obvious as to need only the merest indication. Not many pupils play bars 25-27 without noticing that the entry of the subject in the left hand fizzles out, that the pedal comes in only to play the humble rôle of harmonic support, and that the subject in the right hand apparently begins with its third

note. I say "apparently" because a second glance shows that the entire subject is there, though its first two notes are hidden in the semi-quavers. Even Spitta seems to have missed them, for he says the left-hand entry "is transferred after a few notes to the right hand." It is not a case of transference, but a puny attempt at a stretto. Here are the three bars in question:

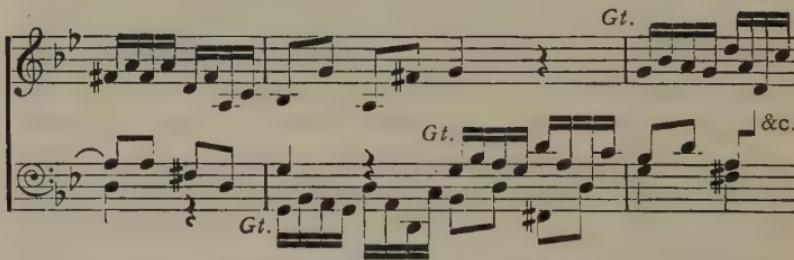


Very little resource is shown in the treatment of the subject throughout. We have practically the same accompanying counterpoint at each appearance, helped out by a third part which does little beyond running in sixths with the counter-subject or hanging on to an inverted dominant

pedal. There are less than a dozen bars of four-part harmony in the whole work, and five of these are in an episode; and yet such is the charm of the fugue that we would not exchange it for some of the most formally perfect examples by Bach or anybody else. It has the three essentials of all delightful music—tunefulness, vital rhythm, and spontaneity. No faults of construction can damn a work in which these qualities are prominent, any more than formal perfection can save one in which they are absent. The wise teacher will not fail to point the moral when his pupils are revelling in this fugue—as they always do.

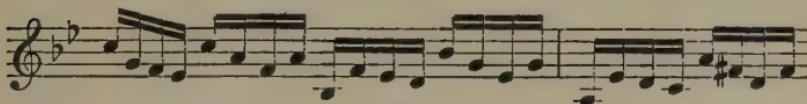
One or two practical points call for notice. Shall we shake on each of the long-held manual notes? Some editions call for a trill in every case except that beginning in bar 35, where it is clearly impossible. Others indicate it only in the two appearances of the long note as the highest part. This seems the sounder plan, as the shake is then fairly easy, and the passages gain a good deal in brilliance. The sustained G in the tenor seventeen bars from the end is better without the shake, because the note is the centre round which the semiquaver pedal passage plays, and a shake obscures the outline. The trill sometimes suggested for the alto of the final bars is also scarcely worth the trouble. After all, we must remember that a long shake was originally little more than a device intended to produce the effect of a sustained note on instruments of the clavecin type, whereon a real *sostenuto* was impossible. Its use on the organ is purely ornamental, and it rarely makes its full effect save when it stands out at the top.

The fugue calls for bright rather than loud registration, though the full organ may well be used at the end. As the writing is mostly thin and rather high on the keyboard we should be careful to use only the less aggressive of the 4-ft. stops, except in the passage preceding the C minor entry of the subject (where the harmony is in four parts with some low pedal notes), and in the closing bars. The last episode may be played on the Swell or Choir, preferably the former, the Choir sounding rather lifeless after the stirring C minor passage. The return to the Great for ending is a bit of a problem. The Augener edition suggests this plan :



which is excellent in its bringing out of the imitation, but decidedly risky in execution. On the whole, there is much to be said in favour of staying comfortably on the Great, reducing it to 8-ft. diapasons, and beginning to build up the tone again half-way through the episode. We may increase to full without Great reeds in the bar before the pedal entry, because thereafter we have no spare limbs for registration purposes. Everything else may be added for the final bar and a half.

Editions vary as to the text of the sixth and seventh bars from the end. The Novello version of the left-hand part is :



The usual reading (which appeared in the earlier issues of the Novello edition)



is certainly more melodious, convenient, and logical.

Almost as popular as the short G minor, and a more significant piece of music, is the "Little" Prelude and Fugue in E minor (II., 44). It evidently dates from this period, for there are traces of Northern influence in both movements, and no sign that Bach had yet been affected by his growing acquaintance with the Italian string composers. The opening of the Prelude, all the florid passages, and especially the double shakes and the pedal solo, are as Buxtehedian as can be. There is, however, far more feeling present than is usually the case in material of the kind. The emotional climax of the Prelude is the passage in which a little four-note motive appears in an inner part, accompanied by detached chords. It is perhaps one of the earliest examples of a liberal use of the dominant minor ninth as an emotional factor. Bach gives us seven bars of it. Or are there only

six?—for bar 18 in the edition before us is not universally accepted. Griepenkerl says it was “formerly wanting,” and inserted it in his edition on the authority of manuscript copies belonging to Forkel and Kittel. Here is the passage, the doubtful bar being enclosed in dotted lines:

As is so often the case in matters of textual accuracy, the difference is not very important from a playing point of view. Probably not one listener in a hundred would feel able to say which of the two versions is preferable. The interest lies rather in the little glimmer of light it sheds on the methods of the composer—and perhaps on those of his editors. When an interpolation is by way of making a passage smooth and conventional, as happens here, we are on the whole inclined to look

on it with suspicion. We know Bach's fondness for the unexpected, even in his youth, and we know that his editors have usually liked the other thing. It is easy to imagine them shaking their learned heads over this passage, and pointing out that the E in the bass ought not to rise an augmented fourth. Knowing that one of them inserted a bar of 6·4 harmony after bar 22 of the First Prelude of the "48," in order to avoid Bach's consecutive diminished sevenths, we naturally credit them with any passage that looks like a conscientious teacher's correction of a clever pupil's exercise. The doubtful bar is not only conventional; it is weak in that it moves to a half-close already reached more effectively in the preceding bar, and so gives us consecutive bars with the same harmony on the first beat. Although, as was said above, very few listeners would be conscious of the stagnation thus caused, most players who give both versions a trial will end with a strong preference for:



with its bold transference of the seventh.

The Prelude is often spoilt by too quick a pace. Playing it with plenty of diapasons in a big building, we may even regard the quaver as the unit. Only a slow pace can give the pedal passages the right ponderous effect—especially the final one, with its naive increase of emphasis by extension of the thirds into tenths.

## 46 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

The repeated cadence is curious, and should be marked. If we are giving the Prelude loud treatment, we should reserve something for the final bar ; if soft, there should still be a stop to put in.

The melancholy of the Prelude is more than maintained in the Fugue. Indeed, the chief significance of the work lies in the fact of its being the first expression—at all events so far as organ music is concerned—of the deep feeling which was to find such noble utterance later, especially in the great B minor Prelude and Fugue, and the D minor (Doric) Fugue. It has another link with so much of the ripest of Bach's music in that it is capable of several widely different methods of performance. Hearing it played with delicate and expressive registration, we feel that just so, and in no other way, should it be allowed to deliver its message—until we hear it invested with all the pomp of a huge organ. We then see that it has more than one mood. The two pairs of repeated notes with which it opens are no longer a timid question, but a ringing challenge. We do not exaggerate when we say that it ceases to be a lyric, and becomes a miniature epic.

A third interpretation is no less effective if our organ allows us to carry it out. We may begin very softly, and gradually work up to a triumphant conclusion. In this case the major ending given in some editions will be in the picture. Otherwise we shall do well to close with a minor chord.

Like the “short” G minor fugue, this striking work contains a few technical blemishes. The second pedal entry does nothing more than provide harmonic support, and the writing at this point

suddenly changes from two-part counterpoint to five-part harmony, the subject walking between a series of dominant and tonic chords, interspersed with rests. The subject itself is much more striking than such a simple—even bald—progression ought to be. Look at it:



Short as it is, one half is mere repetition. It is a double-barrelled germ rather than a subject. Pirro suggests that the repeated two-note opening on the dominant is due to Buxtehude's



in the well-known Fugue in F, "but there the repetition has all the effect of a joyous affirmation." \*

The pace of the fugue, like that of the prelude, should be decidedly slow. It may be well to add that the *mordente* of the subject should be diatonic, *i.e.*, B, A natural, B, in accordance with Bach's own practice.† Spitta is rightly emphatic as to the weakening effect of the semitone.

The interest of these early works depends very little on their length, as the reader will already have seen. Thus the next essay to be considered calls for brief notice, despite the fact of its being

\* "L'Orgue de Jean-Sébastien Bach," p. 64.

† Dannreuther, "Musical Ornamentation," i., 174.

more than double the length of that just dealt with. It is a Prelude and Fugue in G major (VII., 80), and shows us Bach beginning to cater for himself as an organ virtuoso.

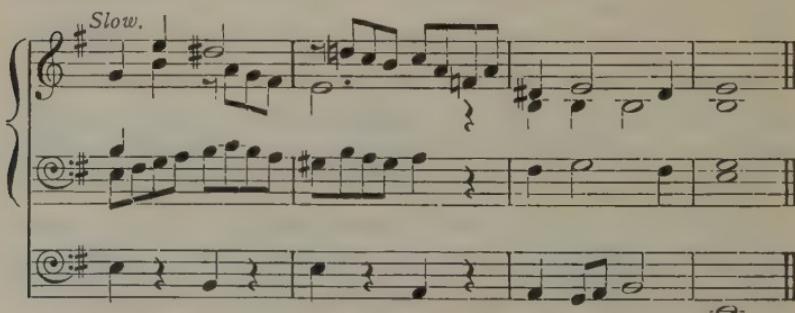
The Prelude is brilliant, but unfortunately has little merit otherwise. After the strangely attractive E minor work it strikes one as being very superficial, though there is a marked advance in technique, especially in the writing for the pedals. (The Weimar organ had a fine pedal department, including a 32-ft. and a 4-ft. reed, and we may imagine young Bach revelling in it.) It is interesting to see Bach for the first time showing himself fully appreciative of the upper part of the pedal board. The pedal solo is a fair specimen of a bad type, calculated to show off both organist and organ-builder, but without a spark of musical interest. Spitta says in its favour that "it is legitimately built upon the fundamental theme." This is true, but as the fundamental theme itself happens to be one of the commonplaces of music the solo can hardly fail to follow suit. These gambols over, the movement improves considerably, though still remaining poor. A *Grave* of three bars leads to a fugue very much like the prelude in style. The subject is decidedly Buxtehedian :

*Alla breve.*

Bach sticks closely to his text, and gives us a fugue at which no stones can be thrown on technical grounds. The pedal part is first-rate. Its entries are preceded by lengthy rests, and it comes in with the subject in telling style. When it has finished with the theme, and the conversation becomes general, it lends a hand with pithy ejaculations. Again we see the upper reaches of the board well used. We may reckon that in this fugue Bach found himself, so far as this important part of organ composition is concerned. In the matter of consistency, too, the fugue is entirely successful. The quaver movement is unbroken, and, despite its length, the movement neither sticks nor gets loose. These merits, however, cannot save a work in which the actual musical interest is slight. A glance at the subject will show that a lengthy movement developed from it is likely to be spoilt by a kind of chattering volubility. Bach has not escaped this danger, and so the fugue makes little appeal to-day, despite its animation and the really splendid vigour of its close. Even Spitta (who uses the adjectives "rich," "beautiful," and "splendid" in connection with the prelude!) admits that the fugue is too long, and that its animation is of a "more purely external kind."

The Eight Short Preludes and Fugues (I.) are sometimes regarded as very early works, but there can be no doubt that Bach wrote them after he had been settled at Weimar for a considerable time —long enough to have gathered round him a few pupils. We may well understand that good teaching material—brief, employing two manuals, and with a definite and moderately difficult pedal-

part—must have been scarce at that date. Bach's endeavour to supply the deficiency was so successful that the collection—at all events the fugal part—has taken a high place in the curriculum, and is hardly likely to be superseded. The general level of excellence in the writing proves them to belong to a period when the composer was approaching maturity. Only once—at the end of No. 6—do we find a weak use of the pedal; the subjects are tuneful and good, the episodes generally natural and interesting, and the counterpoint usually quite first-rate. Even their simplicity and brevity indicate a fairly late date, for youthful genius is not usually inclined to be simple and unpretentious, and Bach was no exception to the rule. A further hint as to the date of these works is to be found in the preludes, which remind us that in his early Weimar days Bach was much attracted by the Concertos of Vivaldi. The movements in which this influence is most apparent are the first (especially in bars 5-8), fifth, seventh, and eighth. The result is not happy, the preludes being a long way below the fugues in interest. Only one is really worth playing to-day—that in E minor, a thoughtful little piece with the real Bach spirit, especially in its gravely expressive close:



The remaining preludes being so inferior, it is a matter for regret that so many pupils are made to waste time over them. Such technical material as they contain can easily be provided by the shorter and easier of the chorale preludes. Many of these are for manuals alone, and so provide valuable studies in three- and four-part playing, besides being so delightful as pure music that a player finds pleasure in them long after his pupil days are over, whereas he gives the Eight Preludes a wide berth save when teaching.

## §

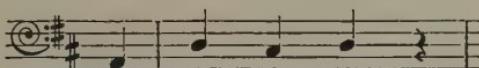
Like other composers who were also famous as players, Bach left a number of works in which the virtuoso is considered first, last, and almost all the time. But just as we have seen him rapidly drawing away from his contemporaries in the melodic and expressive power of his fugues, so we find him very soon leaving them far behind in the writing of bravura pieces. The toccatas and more showy fugues of Buxtehude, Froberger, Muffat, Pachelbel, and other early writers have little interest for us to-day, whereas Bach's best essays in the field are still among the most popular of recital items. Their superiority to other works of the period lies in the originality and musical value of their subject-matter, in the significance—sometimes even fire and passion—of the bravura passages, and, perhaps above all, in their continuity.

The chief works of the concert type clearly belong to the nine years Bach spent at Weimar. His fame as a player grew rapidly, and he seems to have made a tour every autumn, giving recitals at the various Courts and large towns. No doubt

each journey found him ready with one or two fresh pieces wherewith to astonish his hearers. How completely he astonished them is shown by rhapsodies quoted by Spitta and others. Thus when Bach went to Cassel in 1714 to try the restored organ at the Court, he so amazed the Crown Prince by a pedal solo that a ring set with precious stones left the Royal finger for Bach's pocket. Spitta tells us that "an intelligent admirer of art" describing the incident says that Bach's "feet flew over the pedal-board as if they had wings; and the ponderous and ominous tones pierced the ear of the hearer like a flash of lightning or a clap of thunder; and if the skill of his feet alone earned him such a gift, what would the prince have given him had he used his hands as well?"

One of the best of these show pieces is the Prelude and Fugue in D major (VI., 10). Griepenkerl says the Prelude and Fugue were usually regarded as separate works, being found together only in a manuscript belonging to Nicolai. This appears to be the sole authority for their association. Although the fugue might well stand alone, the prelude seems to call for some kind of pendant. The striking *Adagio* with which it ends is clearly an interlude of the kind we find elsewhere in works of this period. (See the *Grave* in the G major Prelude and Fugue discussed on page 48.) It is obviously no fit ending for the Prelude, though as a kind of embryonic slow movement between two brilliant ones it is highly effective. Griepenkerl tells us also that his own manuscript of the Prelude is marked *Concertato*, "whence," he adds, "we may conclude that this composition was not used in

Divine service." The Prelude has a taste of the early French overture style in its opening mixture of pomp and brilliance, though we see the hand of Buxtehude in bars 13 and 14. A genuine Bach stroke—one of his most brilliant—is the scale of D following on the close in F sharp major. The interest of this splendid beginning is not well maintained by the *Alla Breve*. There is far too much mechanical use of a sequence that may have been fairly fresh in Bach's day, but which has long since become threadbare. The tamest parts of the movement are those based on a little figure:



which Bach is content to repeat in various keys. (Years later, when writing the "Great" G minor Fugue, Bach used the figure again. It comes on the scene in bar 57, very modestly in the alto, in a kind of "by the way" style:

But how much more resourceful is Bach's use of it! No longer made to stand alone and show its poverty, it now takes its place in the general

discussion, and becomes a significant feature for nearly forty bars. It would be difficult to find a better example of the mature Bach's power of imparting significance to a scrap of commonplace.)

The *Alla Breve* calls for straightforward treatment, with a few changes of manual that suggest themselves. As we shall have used the reeds and mixtures in the opening, and shall require them for the *Adagio*, we might well restrict ourselves to diapasons for the body of the work. A good pace seems to be called for. Spitta says that the *Alla Breve* direction "is not to be understood of the pace, but rather indicates only the style, which is strictly sustained." Far more convincing is the unexpectedly racy remark of Mattheson in his "*Grosse Generalbassschule*," Hamburg, 1732, quoted by Pirro in his "*L'Orgue de Jean-Sébastien Bach*":

"It is not necessary to indicate the pace of an *Alla Breve*. The term alone serves to stir the most sluggish mind, and to loosen the stiffest fingers. It is as if one said to one's horse, 'Gee up !'" ("*C'est, par comparaison, comme si l'on disait : hue ! à un cheval.*")

The *Adagio* is a dramatic interruption that leaves all similar bridge-passages of the period far behind. The sombre effect of the double pedal, the grinding discords, and the daring harmony, combine to produce a poignancy that is all the more startling from its position in the middle of a brilliant concert piece.

The Fugue is often spoken of in exaggerated terms. Spitta's description of it as "one of the most dazzlingly beautiful of all the master's organ works" is well known, and was so readily accepted

in this country by the early Bachites that the movement has been allowed to put finer examples in the shade. Even Parry repeats Spitta's "dazzling," calls the fugue "superb music," and says that it "shows the composer at a very high pitch of mastery."

With due respect to these authorities, a growing number of us feel that it is conspicuous for neither beauty nor mastery. It is too superficial to be beautiful, and in regard to both invention and construction it is mere child's play beside the fugues which are generally agreed to be masterly. But we could ill spare a work so full of high spirits, and so unfailingly effective. It will always be a favourite with players if only for the sheer physical enjoyment it yields. It has also the unusual merit of sounding a good deal more difficult than it really is--though players do not emphasise this point! If our final scamper up the pedal-board leaves our hearers feeling like his Highness of Cassel, why break the spell?

It is hardly possible to play the D major too quickly, provided we do not sacrifice clearness. This last requirement depends so much upon prompt speech of the organ and favourable acoustic that we should not include the work in a programme without being sure of these two points. Clearly the final portion demands the use of full power, and the pedal passages are ruined by (say) a sluggish pedal 16-ft. reed. And if the building is so large and resonant that clearness can be obtained only by adopting a slow pace, we shall do well to substitute a broader example of Bach's work. It is odd that there should be such divergence of opinion as to the pace of this

movement. The Novello edition suggests  $\text{J} = 76$ , Augener  $\text{J} = 100$ , and Peters  $\text{J} = 80$ . Schirmer gives no figures, but the Editors say, "Do not take the *tempo* too hastily, so that the piece may not be deprived of its majestic character." But where is the majesty? If the work is not a brilliant *scherzo*, what is it? Spitta, who certainly did not underestimate the dignified side of Bach, says:

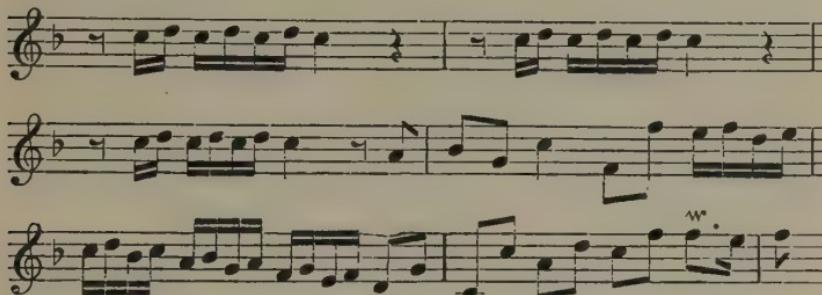
"This is a bravura piece from beginning to end. . . . In this whirling dance of notes, which becomes madder and madder towards the end, we can appreciate the truth of the words in the Necrology: 'With his two feet he could perform on the pedals passages which would be enough to provoke many a skilled clavier-player with five fingers.' "

In the face of this we can have no doubt that Bach made the pace as hot as his instruments would allow. If he played on a modern organ he would make it hotter still. Moreover, in settling points of this kind we have to remember that our conceptions of musical pace are much more pronounced than were those of our great-great-grandfathers. Our *adagio* is slower and our *allegro* quicker. On the whole, then,  $\text{J} = 100$  is a good pace, and if we can manage to get in twenty more crotchets per minute with clearness so much the better.

Everybody knows that this fugue owes a good deal to Buxtehude, but the likeness is not in the subject, as is frequently stated. Even Parry makes a slip here. He says that the fugue is interesting historically, "in consequence of the resemblance of

## PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN D 57

the subject to one by Buxtehude in F." Here is Buxtehude's subject:



There is some similarity of type, but no more. That Bach had the older man's work at the back of his mind, however, seems clear from this remarkable thematic coincidence that occurs later:

BUXTEHDE.

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff begins with a half note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The middle staff begins with a quarter note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The bottom staff begins with a sixteenth-note pattern followed by a quarter note.

BACH.

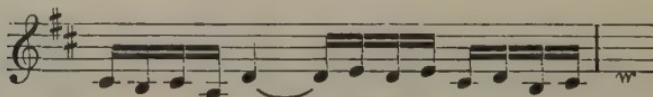
The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff begins with a half note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The middle staff begins with a quarter note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The bottom staff begins with a sixteenth-note pattern followed by a quarter note.

And a reference to the *Vivace* of Buxtehude's Fugue in F sharp minor (especially bars 18, 19, 25-29, and 42-52) will show further reminiscences, less exact as to notes, but unmistakable.

An interesting variant of the fugue exists. It will be found at the beginning of Vol. IV. of Peters, and in Vol. X. of the Augener edition. It is obviously an early form of the work, though Spitta thought otherwise. He says:

"It appears, moreover, that Bach afterwards clipped the too luxuriant growth of brilliant executive passages, and greatly condensed the whole, since it occurs also in a form thirty-nine bars shorter, which could scarcely have come from any hand but that of the composer himself."

A comparison of the two versions shows the longer form to be better in every respect. The chief difference is that bars 80-95, with their effective modulation in B major and C sharp minor, do not appear in the early sketch. A trifling change in the subject is all to the good. Bach first wrote the ending thus :



The later version :



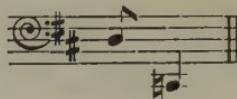
is far more emphatic.

If we want to see how completely Bach was already outstripping his models we have but to compare his D major Fugue with the F major work of Buxtehude. The Northern master hardly ever leaves the tonic and dominant, and is unable to maintain the animation with which he begins. At the end he tails off into a cadenza of conventional scale-passages. Bach is not only faithful to his subject, but becomes more and more exuberant as he develops it. And the ending drives the argument home in no uncertain fashion. It is an excellent example of a platitude being delivered with such gusto and audacity as to take us by storm. On paper it is nothing. In its place at the close of the work, and played on a big organ, few things could be more emphatic.

A few years ago some eminent musicians amused themselves and us by adapting words to Bach's fugue subjects. (Some themes—that of the "little" E minor, for example—seem in themselves very near to speech.) Probably most of us, when finishing the D major Fugue, have felt impelled to set words to the final pedal leap, and say, as Bach certainly seems to say:

(That's THAT !)

And no doubt we have at least once in our lives got over-excited and, by making a wild shot and playing

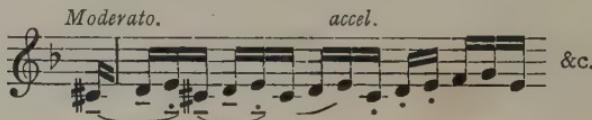


have added yet one more point to this excellent *Scherzo*.

§

Another of these concert works that still holds its own is the Toccata and Fugue in D minor (VI., 2). It is far more imaginative than the work we have just been considering, and even more brilliant when it aims at that quality.

Like the D major fugue, it is less difficult than it sounds, so far as mere note playing is concerned. It calls, however, for a good deal in the way of interpretation, and the phrasing, especially in some of the rapid manual passages, needs thought. If these passages are played with the speed and power they seem to demand, we must take care they do not reach the ear as a meaningless scramble. We can guard against this by beginning them with some deliberation, making the design clear in the first few groups, and then increasing the pace, usually to the end, though it will often be a good plan to retard the closing notes. This method adds the touch of lucidity without which such passages often lose point. Thus, the *Prestissimo* beginning in bar 3 should open thus :



# TOCCATA AND FUGUE IN D MINOR 61

The phrasing of the third group is even more important. It should be thus:



so that the progression is clearly shown as a chain of suspensions:

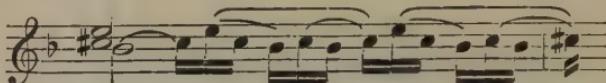


and not common chords:



This point is so obvious that one is astonished at the number of players who apparently overlook it. The grouping should be kept up to the end, so that the pedal D closes the cadenza, thus:

The Schirmer edition suggests the following grouping for the *prestissimo*, bars 22-27 :



At a first glance this seems far-fetched, but there is much to be said for it. It brings the passage into line with its predecessors, and makes it a good deal more than a prolonged diminished seventh. Moreover the chord of A in bar 27 is then the final note of a group, instead of being preceded by a kind of hiccup.

The Fugue is a very sketchy example of the form, but an enjoyable piece of music, and the slenderness and simplicity of its first fifty bars make it an excellent foil to the tempestuous opening pages. No less admirable is the way in which Bach begins at bar 85 to work back to the mood of the Toccata, with a climax and pause at bar 127 that say "Here we are!" as plainly as can be.

The registration of the Fugue should be quiet until bar 85. Editors differ (or remain silent) as to whether the shakes should be with the tone or half-tone above. The former has an antique flavour that is effective, and it also avoids some ugly clashes. The arpeggio passages are better on two manuals, so as to produce an effect of contrast, or even of echo. We have already observed that the rapid use of alternate keyboards was a popular means of obtaining variety in the early days of organ playing. Bach does not indicate such changes, it is true, but we must not argue too much from that fact. If he went touring with this piece, as seems certain, he

probably found it convenient to leave the matter to be settled according to the capabilities of the various organs on which he played. We may adopt any plan that suits our instrument, so long as it brings us on to the right manual—preferably the Great—for the succeeding passage.

In bar 103 the duplication of the E at \* is so weak that we may well wonder if the alto E is not a slip of the pen for G :



Opinions differ as to the manual for the final *recitativo* and *presto*. The Choir is apt to sound feeble; the full Swell is frequently confused, and moreover its use involves an awkward join when we go on to the Great for the slow chords. On the whole it seems better to play the passages on the full Great without 16-ft. (and perhaps without reeds), bringing on everything for the chords. A passage of this type for orchestra would not be given to the flutes, but to the strings (without double-basses), playing *ff*. If our Swell is slow of speech we should uncouple it for the *recitativo* and *presto*, drawing the coupler for the last three demisemiquavers in bars 130 and 136, and playing these notes deliberately so that they lead into the chords. What a magnificent stroke is the pedal-point at bars 132 and 133, with its startling change from a second inversion of A minor to a first inversion of C!

Some players end the work *mf* or *p*—an anti-climax surely. If a quiet ending is desired, however, the registration suggested by Mr. Heathcote Statham\* is worth consideration :

This Toccata is so much more fiery and imaginative than any other of Bach's works bearing the title that, as Pirro remarks, we are justified in regarding it as programme music. As to the nature of the programme he says :

"The dazzling lightning, the clap of thunder, rumbling formidably in the repercussions of a long broken chord, above the crash of a profound pedal; the wind, then the hail: we are in a classical storm."†

This suggestion may shock some of us until we remind ourselves of Bach's fondness for descriptive writing. The man who did not hesitate to introduce equally frank pictorial effects into a setting of

\* "The Organ and its Position in Musical Art."

† "L'Orgue de Jean-Sébastien Bach."

the Passion would have no scruples about writing an organ storm, though he may have hesitated to label it as such. And we must not condemn organ "storms" too hastily, for most of the classical composers have given us bad weather on the orchestra. If anything, the advantage is with the organ, because it can produce a good specimen without putting us to the expense of engaging fifty or sixty players. At all events, there is piquancy in the thought that John Sebastian went a-touring with a Storm in his pocket, for all the world like a modern music-hall organist.

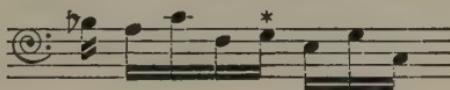
## §

The Toccata and Fugue in C (IX., 137) is on the whole a less successful concert piece than those we have just been considering. Though it was probably one of the works Bach wrote for his recital tours, it is a good deal more than a mere show piece, even its over-plentiful florid passages being full of character. As Parry says, "Bach makes such passages almost sufficiently interesting to redeem a branch of art which has been more piteously discredited than any in its whole range, save and except the operatic aria." The long single-part manual flourish with which the Toccata opens is far more significant than the average contemporary writing of the type. We do little more than tolerate such flights to-day, but we can easily imagine that by their freedom and originality, and by their success in implying a fine harmonic background, the best of Bach's examples were extremely popular when new. Opinions differ widely as to the registration of the one we are considering. As in all similar passages we must be guided by the

resources at our disposal, and by the acoustic of the building. On one point only is it possible to be definite, and that is the question of pace. We may differ in the matter of power and tone-colour, but we must surely agree that high speed and brilliance are called for. When Bach writes a bravura passage, we do him poor service by trying to make it dignified or meditative.

The pedal solo is one of the finest ever written—perhaps the finest. Such things are not often perpetrated to-day—fortunately—and perhaps the only modern examples worthy of a place beside this of Bach are the sweeping tune with which Franck opens his Final in B flat, and the more obviously attractive example in Guilmant's D minor Symphony. Bach's solo covers a good deal of ground. That in itself is not a matter for praise, because we have seen how easy it was even for Bach to give the organist quite a long walk with nothing happening to make it worth while. But this solo is unconventional in several ways. Its ejaculatory opening, with repetitions that may be regarded either as emphasising a point or echoing it (and which may therefore be registered accordingly by the addition or subtraction of a reed or some other telling stop), its rhythmical variety, and its highly organized character put it in a class by itself. Of course, like all pedal solos with any pretensions to length, it is ineffective unless played on an organ of big scale. It is a fatal weakness of the type that purely musical considerations count for so little. We may play almost any of Bach's fugues on a small organ with one stop drawn, or on a pedal pianoforte, and enjoy them. But a pedal solo that does not set loose

window-panes rattling is a thing of naught. If it goes delicately it does nothing that cannot be managed with greater ease and effect on a manual. Before leaving this solo, we should note in bar 4 the startling drop of a seventh, a favourite device of Bach, but used in no other pedal solo. The effect is that of a wrong note, until the repetition reassures the ear. In bar 16, the last note of the third group should surely be A. Most editions give G, but if we look at the next section, we shall see that Bach develops a good deal of the movement from the second half of this bar, and a comparison makes it pretty certain that the note should be A. Here is the second half of bar 16:



and here is the figure as it appears in the same key at the end of the *Allegro*:



This evidence ought to settle the point.

The pedal solo leads into a fine, vigorous movement, in style unlike any of Bach's previous organ music. Here, as in the *Adagio* which follows, we see the influence of the Italian chamber music with which Bach was now busy in his capacity as Kammermusicus at the Weimar court. Always fond of experiment, he evidently tried to adapt the concerto form to the organ by imposing its idiom and construction on the Toccata. The result is a

not entirely satisfactory hybrid—a conclusion at which Bach himself probably arrived, for he made no further attempts in the same direction. This *Allegro* is the finest part of the whole work, despite its rather too frequent full closes. It has a Handelian breadth in places. A striking point in its construction is its being concerned almost equally with two subjects, the figure quoted above, and :



Both are drawn from the pedal solo, with excellent result on the score of continuity.

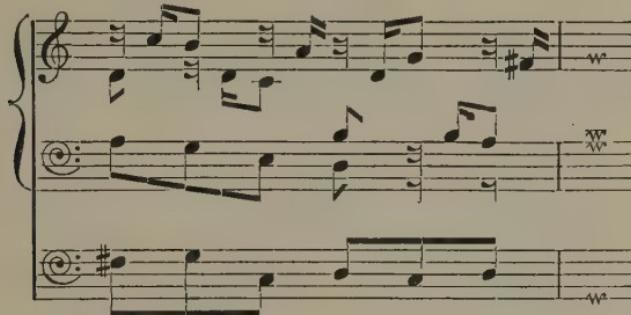
The *Adagio*, despite its charm, is perhaps a little bit out of the picture. It suggests a violin solo with cembalo accompaniment, and is altogether of a more antique cast than most of its surroundings. Some editions suggest the elimination of bars 20 and 21, on the ground that they are missing in one of the manuscripts.

The *Grave* is a problem. Clearly Bach does not write in seven parts unless he wants plenty of tone. If we begin the passage loudly the change from the delicate ending of the *Adagio* is too abrupt, as the brief recitative is not long enough to serve as a buffer. If we begin quietly there is not room in eight bars for a well-graded *crescendo* to the full power demanded by the cadence. Most editors suggest full Swell for the two bars of recitative. Perhaps a better plan would be to begin the *Grave* with a few *mf* Swell stops, and add a good deal for the B flat, increasing the

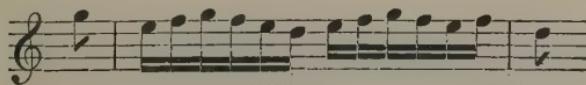
power as the scale descends, coming on to the full Great with the chord, thus :



The fugue is a good deal in the Northern style, not only as to its subject, but also in the rather fidgety writing in such passages as :

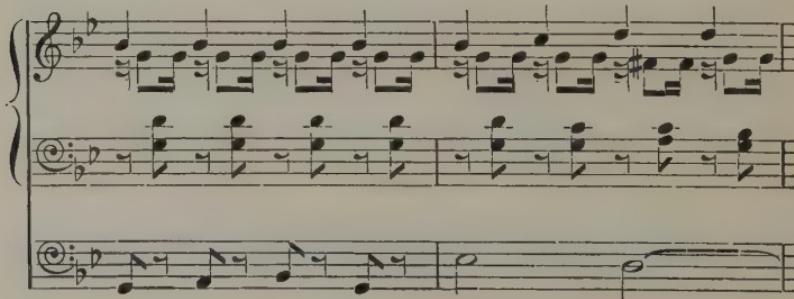


As a whole the movement is "singularly gay and genial," as Parry says, but it is a long way from showing Bach at his best. The threefold delivery of the opening figure of the subject leads to monotony, and the two bars of *arpeggio* that follow are weak and fidgety. The strong point of the work is the flowing use of the first bar of the counter-subject

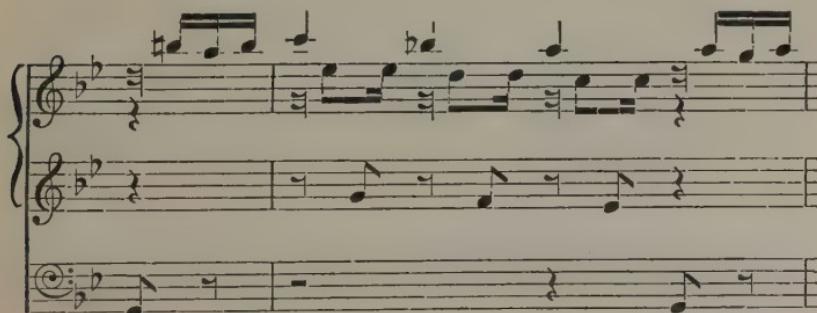


for episodical purposes. The movement ends, curiously, without pedals, a fact which leads most players to decide that the close must therefore be quiet. The Schirmer edition suggests keeping up the power and holding on the pedal CC to the end. But if this is done, the lower notes of the manual part are likely to be drowned. An alternative that appears to have been overlooked is the conversion of the passage into a pedal solo, beginning with the second semiquaver (G) in bar 139—that is, two bars from the end—playing the chord full organ and (dare one suggest it?) making it into a good double handful of notes.

Perhaps the last Prelude and Fugue Bach wrote while still under Northern influence was one in G minor (VIII., 120), an admirable work which deserves more frequent performance than it gets. It is superior to any similar essay by members of the Northern school, and easily Bach's best bit of fugal writing so far. The Prelude opens in the broken chord style which composers had long since found useful as a means of imparting interest to very simple thematic material. This example is far more expressive than the usual run of such passages, and has a novel feature in the bass hint of the fugue subject:

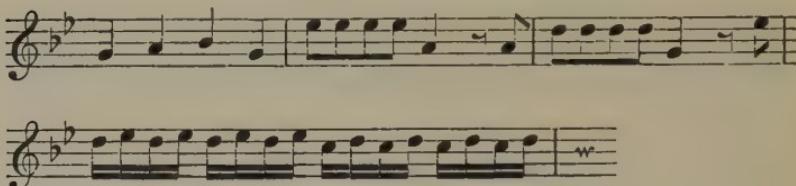


It is so tentative that we wonder if it is a mere coincidence. Perhaps Bach wrote the fugue first, and prefaced its performance one day with an improvisation which he afterwards wrote down. The movement has an impromptu character, and we can easily figure Bach beginning to extemporise with the fugue at the back of his mind, and quite naturally bringing in a reference to its opening phrase. The long sequential passage beginning in bar 19 seems to call for the use of alternate manuals. Played on one keyboard it sounds mechanical after the harmonic novelty has worn off. Many players use a quiet Great and Swell, changing at each bar. Why not call on the Choir as well? With three quiet uncoupled manuals the effect is delightful. The contrasts in tone should not be violent; the sections should almost melt into one another. If we begin with the Swell at bar 19, we arrive at bar 31 with that manual, which we may well increase to full, dropping on to the Great *f* (now coupled to Swell) at bar 32. The close should be worked up to full organ. Apart from its poetic and expressive character as a whole, the movement contains some interesting foretastes of the mature Bach. Note for example the consecutive six-fours in bar 6:

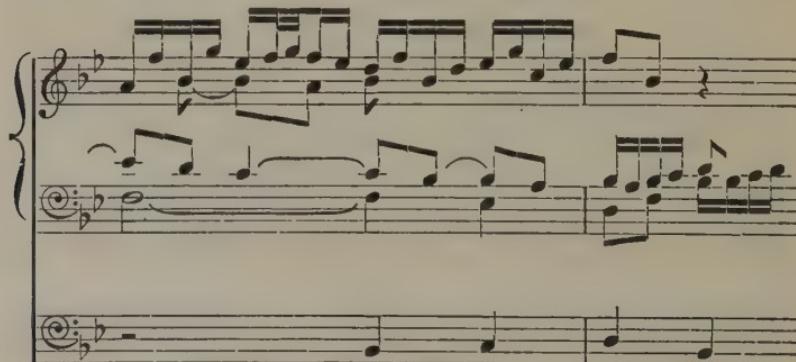


We shall frequently find him showing his fondness for this kind of progression—his last work, written on his death-bed, ends with a string of second inversions over a tonic pedal.

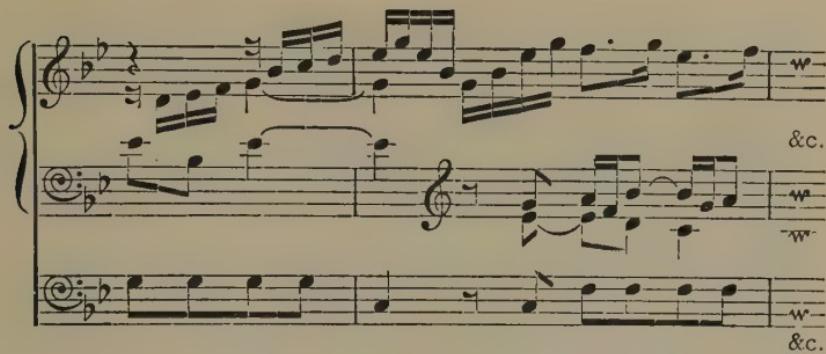
The subject of the fugue:



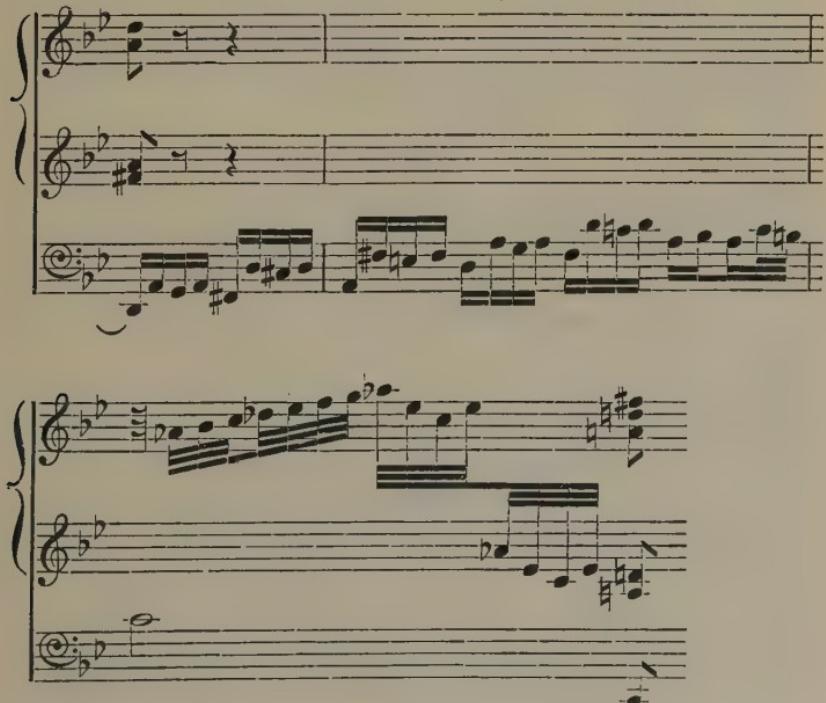
is very Buxtehedian, with its repeated notes and zigzagging close. But, the exposition past, we have the best of reasons for overlooking its conventionality. Throughout, its working shows great variety and resource. There is no more than a suggestion of a regular counter-subject, and even that is soon dropped. Each entry gives us delightfully fresh and spontaneous treatment. Nothing could be more buoyantly tuneful than the counterpoint over the subject in the pedal, commencing thus :



# PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN G MINOR 73



The whole fugue is full of this happy youthful spirit. Bright and clear registration is called for, power being reserved for the final section, beginning with the pedal entry in the tonic. There is a fine stroke following on the close in D:

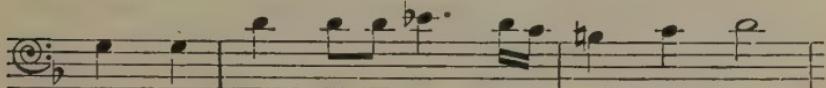


The Augener edition suggests a flat for the last A in the pedal solo. Why? The whole of the solo is simply the dominant chord with the seventh added at the end. Anticipation of the Neapolitan sixth would badly blunt the point of the progression. Surprises of this kind should be emphasised rather than toned down. Nor is there much to be said in favour of the German Bach Society's suggestion that we should omit the second half of bar 51 and the first half of bar 52, in order to avoid the reiterated cadence. There seems to be no doubt about the genuineness of the passage, so we must take it as it stands. Moreover, the effect is by no means bad, owing to the second of the cadences being used as a semiquaver take-off for the ensuing episode. It is odd, by the way, that Parry seems to have forgotten to mention this excellent fugue—one which we may imagine appealed very much to him.

## §

Fortunately Bach's interest in Italian music did not stop at the fiddlers. He looked farther back, to the Italy that was the earliest home of organ music. We shall see later how much his finest fugues owe to his study of this school. As a beginning we find him writing the Canzona in D minor (II., 34). The canzona was a favourite form with the early Italian organists. It may be regarded as a keyboard madrigal, generally in two movements, with the theme of the first movement changed and made to do duty as a basis for the second. Bach not only adopted the form: he even went to Frescobaldi for the subject. He possessed a copy of the old composer's

"Fiori musicali" (inscribed with his own hand "J. S. Bach, 1714"), on page 77 of which the theme appears in this form:



Pirro points out that the chromatic counter-subject is to be found on page 38 of the same book, but as almost every composer of the time made liberal use of the same series of notes we need attach no importance to the fact. As usual, John Sebastian leaves the form better than he found it. Nothing that we know of Frescobaldi is so well worth playing to-day as this austere beautiful piece of Bach.

We shall agree with Spitta that the almost equally fine Alla Breve in D (II., 26) is due to Italian influence. It is a closely-knit fugue of the type the early Southern composers called *ricercare*, and is splendidly effective played on fine diapasons. Its subject is the well-worn series of notes used by composers of all periods and countries, though we English think of it chiefly in connection with Byrd's "Non nobis."

Two other works which owe their origin to Italy are the expressive double fugue—or, rather, fugue on two subjects—in B minor (III., 60) and the long double fugue in C minor (X., 230). The former borrows its pair of subjects from Corelli. The Italian said all he had to say in thirty-nine bars; Bach found matter enough for over a hundred. Some of the episodical writing is thin and fussy, but there are some delightful points, e.g., the way the subject soars out in bar 38, after the low

two-part writing for left hand and pedal, and the very close and effective *stretto* towards the end.

The C minor fugue is on a subject of Legrenzi, and must be written down as a failure. It contains so many full closes that the movement never gets well under way. To make matters worse, it is cast in a form that rarely avoids being tedious—a fugue on two subjects announced separately, fully developed, and then combined. One of the chief requirements of a fugue is that the interest should be cumulative. In a double fugue of this type we are pulled up for the delivery and exposition of the second theme at a time when the excitement ought to be increasing, and a further decline in interest is risked when a third section is started by the combination of the two subjects. Good and effective fugues have been written on this model, but very few, and this Bach specimen is not one of them. The frequent and irritating cadences, added to the inherent difficulty of the form, are too much for it. Even the faithful Spitta feels that all is not as it should be. He says, "A striking feature is the constant recurrence of a full close before each entrance of the theme, by which it acquires a somewhat fragmentary and shortbreathed character." However, he concludes his criticism by saying, "Here we have a full and mighty organism, whose abundant beauty far outweighs the deficiencies we have mentioned." Most of us will be of opinion that the scale falls heavily on the other side.

### III.—THE SECOND WEIMAR PERIOD.

Although it is natural and convenient to speak of “the Weimar period,” even a casual survey of the organ music Bach wrote during those nine years shows that there were really two such periods. To the first belong the pieces written in the Northern manner, works becoming more brilliant as Bach’s organ technique developed, until the bravura side is at times unduly prominent. Towards the end of his stay at Weimar we find him adopting a severer style. The fugue subjects are shorter, slow of gait, and suggestive of mental rather than physical energy. The movements evolved from them have much of the architectonic structure and impersonal feeling that were to find their full exemplification in the great B minor, C major, and E flat fugues. We shall best realise this change of style by a glance at the subjects of half a dozen fugues written at this time:

(a)

The musical score consists of a single staff in common time. The key signature indicates two flats. The subject begins with a dotted half note followed by an eighth note. This is followed by a quarter note, a half note, another quarter note, and a series of eighth notes. A tempo marking 'tr' is placed above the staff near the end of the subject.

(b)

The musical score consists of a single staff in common time. The key signature indicates one sharp. The subject begins with a dotted half note followed by an eighth note. This is followed by a quarter note, a half note, another quarter note, and a series of eighth notes. A tempo marking 'tr' is placed above the staff near the end of the subject.

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

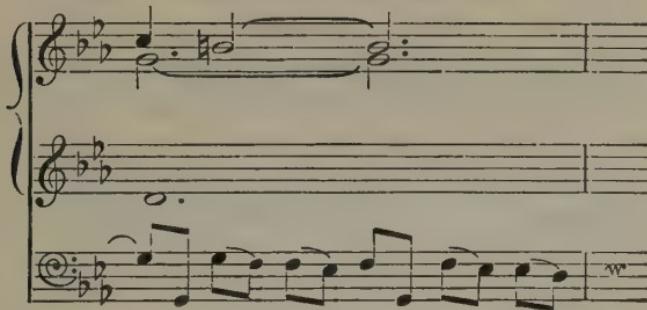
We have here the very antithesis of the Northern type of subject, with its zigzag and repeated-note conventions, and its activity that too frequently ran to mere fussiness.

This sudden throwing over of early models was no doubt due largely to the influence of the more severe of the Italian church and organ composers. The Canzona and the Alla Breve showed Bach closely copying their style. In the fugues on the first five of these subjects we see the new idiom assimilated so thoroughly as to mark a new stage in his development. The sixth subject shows a lingering trace of the North, but its energy and

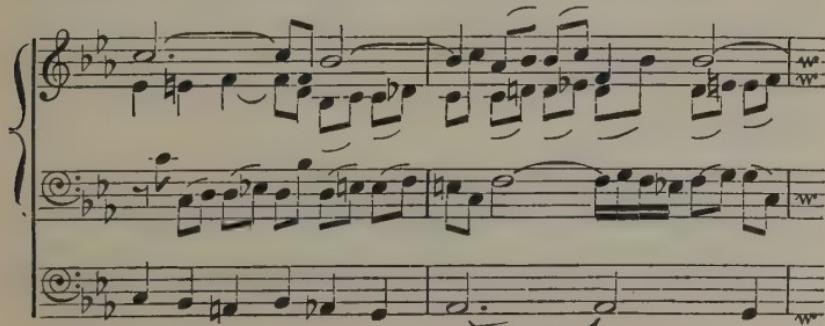
## FANTASIA AND FUGUE IN C MINOR 79

compactness suggest the Bach who was nearing his prime. We will begin our survey of these works with a glance at this fugue and the Fantasia which serves as its prelude (III., 76).

The Fantasia has none of the free and rhapsodical characteristics we associate with the title. It begins with imitative treatment of a simple theme over a tonic pedal. The delivery of the subject in the bass brings us to a half close out of which grows a second theme strongly suggestive of strings :

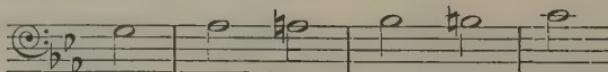


This having been worked, the opening subject reappears, now in the dominant, the second theme stealing in ten bars later, and giving us the most beautiful part of the movement. Its treatment by inversion is singularly graceful and natural :



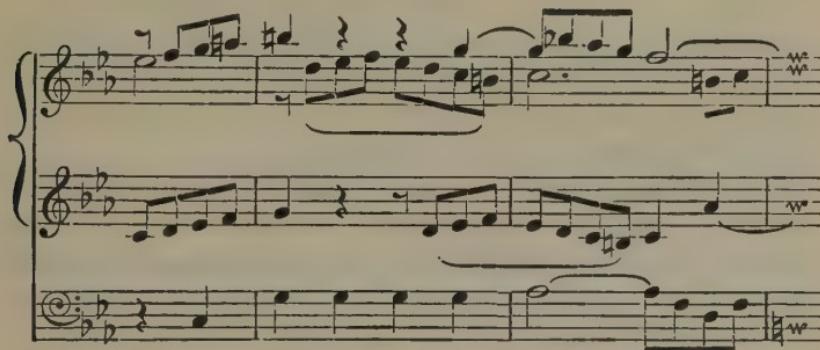
In the whole of Bach's works there are few, if any, more expressive movements than this. Its texture and intimate character are so suggestive of chamber music that we may imagine it to have been written after a specially engrossing bout of string-playing with the Duke's band. Organists are inclined to neglect it in favour of its fugue, because it is too subdued for recital purposes, too long for an in-voluntary, and too quiet for a postlude. But need all postludes be loud and cheerful? If we regard the out-voluntary as an instrumental carrying on of the spirit of the preceding service, there must be many occasions on which such a nobly elegiac piece is exactly in keeping. Note that in playing the Fantasia without the Fugue we should end at the full close two bars before the double-bar, making a good rallentando, and perhaps majorising the final chord. The two bars that follow are merely a link, and have no meaning unless both movements are played.

The Fugue is a remarkably energetic specimen. Though the quaver movement is maintained from the fourth bar to the cadence, there is no impression of motion for the mere sake of motion. Structurally, it gives us something new in its long middle section and in the *da capo* Coda. At first sight the middle section appears to have no connection with the rest of the work. We think of it as a treatment of a new subject:

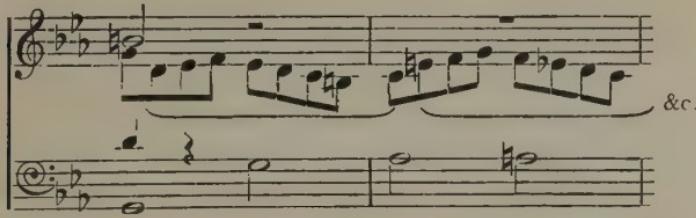


These six notes play so prominent a part for forty bars that we are apt to overlook the fact that

they make their first appearance in the humble capacity of counter-theme. Bach probably began this section with the intention of writing an ordinary episode, choosing for development, according to custom, a fragment of matter previously used. The fragment appears first in bars 24-27, and again as the inner parts of a passage seven bars before the end of the first section :



It reappears in the treble three bars later, and so is fresh in our minds when the episode leads off with it :



But it worked so well, and the chromatic counter-theme proved so fruitful in the way of modulation, that Bach went on and on until the episode became a movement of nearly fifty bars,

with excursions so far afield as B flat minor and E flat minor. He then made a half-close on the dominant of the original key, repeated bars 4-18 of the opening section (adding a pedal part to the first six and slightly changing the last four), brought the subject in once more, and ended with a couple of bars of cadence. This *da capo* treatment is rarely used in fugal construction because mere repetition is foreign to the genius of the form. It succeeds here, as it does in the "Wedge" fugue, because the repetition is preceded by a long and well-contrasted section, and so comes on with much of the freshness of new material.

Griepenkerl tells us that the only copy of this fine work was in a manuscript book of Bach's pupil Krebs, and that but for the intervention of a later organist named Reichardt (let his name be remembered therefor) would have been sold to a shopkeeper as waste paper. The fact leads to melancholy speculation as to the manuscripts that were less lucky. At the foot the copyist has written: "*Soli Deo Gloria, den 10 Januarii, 1751,*" a date only a few months after Bach's death.

The Fantasia spoken of above has a five-part companion in the same key (III., 57). It is said to have been originally attached to the fugue on the fifth subject of the group quoted on page 78. Probably Bach felt that a somewhat severe five-part fugue needed a freer companion than a closely imitative Fantasia, also in five parts. He wrote its present splendid prelude a good many years later.

The two Fantasias are remarkably alike in mood. There is even a likeness in material, the subject of the five-part work (*a*) having

much in common with the second theme of its fellow (b) :

(a)

(b)

Both begin with an exposition over a tonic pedal, and both call for quiet expressive treatment, with a working-up to a climax at the end—though the four-part work may well be played softly throughout. The five-part Fantasia is the more severe, having no second subject, and sticking so closely to its one brief theme that it almost suggests an *ostinato*. In bar 56 the bass and tenor should surely move in thirds. The subject nowhere else appears as in the pedal part of the second bar below :

Probably the mistake arose through the theme having been originally written throughout thus :

—a form still perpetuated in some editions, with confusing results in the more complex passages.

We may safely surmise that the D, being a small note, was inadvertently omitted. The polyphony in this Fantasia, like that of its four-part companion, is of great beauty and interest.

In the Prelude and Fugue in C major (III., 70) we have two movements notable for compactness and spontaneity. In an early version the Prelude plunged at once into the subject, thus :

and ended rather abruptly one bar after the semi-quaver pedal solo. The very effective three bars of introduction and close were evidently added by Bach during one of the revisions to which most of his works were subjected towards the end of his life.

The subject of the fugue is simplicity itself:

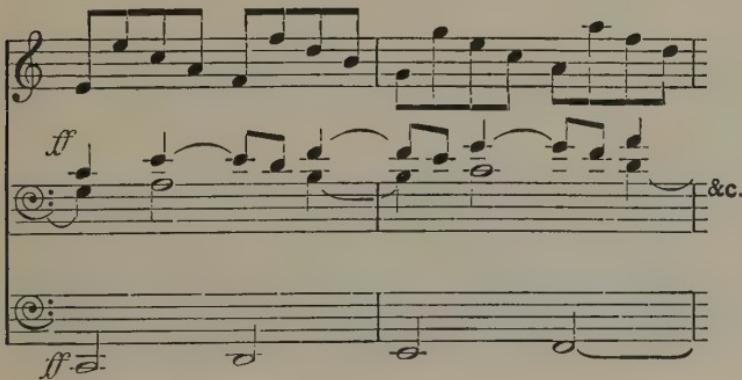
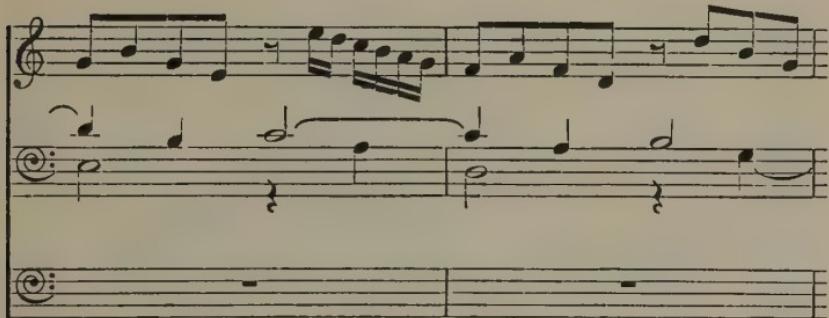
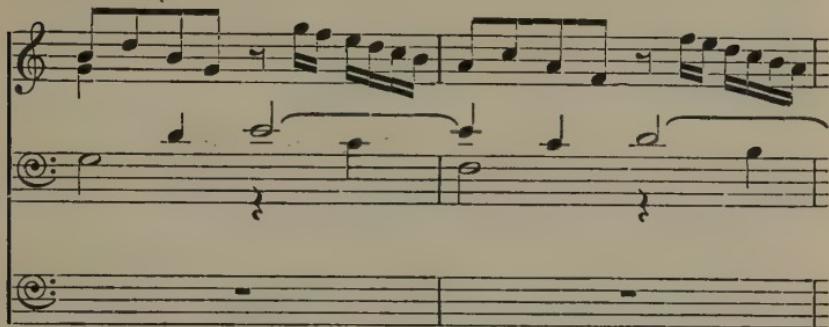
A musical score for 'The Star-Spangled Banner' in 2/2 time. The key signature is F major (one sharp). The melody begins with a half note on G, followed by quarter notes on A, B, and C. A measure rest follows. The next measure starts with a quarter note on D, followed by eighth notes on E, F, G, and H. The final measure shown ends with a half note on G.

but from this modest text is evolved one of the freshest and most delightful of all the shorter fugues of Bach. There is not a bar that does not contribute to the discussion something worth while.

## FUGUE IN C MAJOR

85

As is fitting, the finest stroke comes at the close. We are made to prick up our ears by a new feature in the little flash of semiquavers, and, our attention having been gained, the subject comes rolling up in the bass:



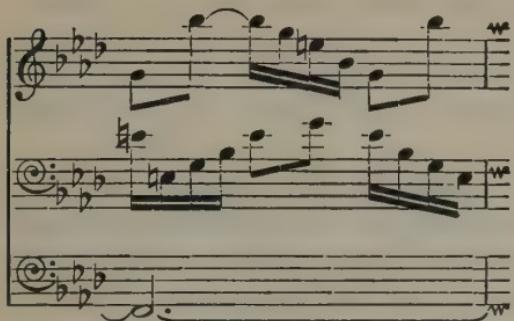
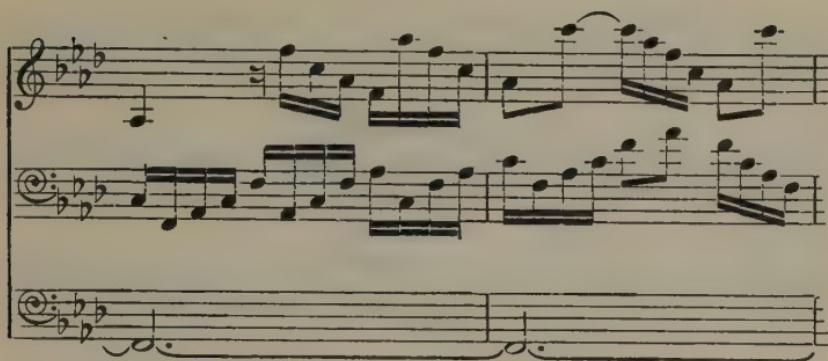
followed by a treble entry which barely reaches its final note before the knot is tied by an uncompromisingly bold cadence. There are no registration problems, the fugue being of the type that should be played on the Great throughout, with plenty of tone at the opening, increasing to full organ at the close.

A fine and weighty pair of works are the Prelude and Fugue in F minor (VI., 21). The Prelude, like the two Fantasias in C minor and the Prelude in C major, is a good example of Bach's rapidly-growing ability to write highly concentrated non-fugal pieces of moderate length. We have only to look at his early preludes and at those of his predecessors in order to realise the importance of this advance. The pioneers in organ composition were able to be fairly coherent when writing fugues, passacaglias, and chorale preludes, because they had a text to which they were more or less tied. When they wrote free preludes and fantasias they were inclined to over-indulgence in showy passage-work and conventional sequences. Of real invention and musical thought there was little, and even that was too often thrust into the background by the superficial element. This dignified and wholly satisfying Prelude shows us Bach well on his way to such tremendous movements as the F major Toccata, and the B minor, E minor, C minor, and C major Preludes.

Like so many of his organ works, it lends itself to more than one interpretation. It may be made brilliant, or impressive, or thoughtful. Perhaps the rolling pedal part of a good deal of it points to breadth as being the effect at which to aim.

## PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN F MINOR 87

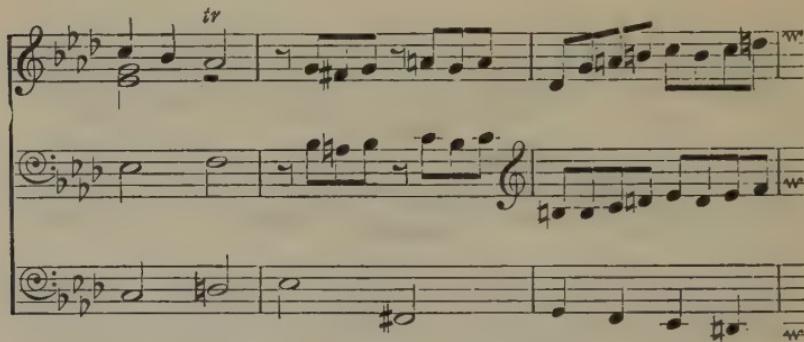
There is a fine sense of spaciousness about most of the manual writing, e.g.:



one of several passages in which Bach shows how much may be done in the laying out of the simplest of progressions. But mere ornamentation for its own sake is eschewed until the close, where three bars of cadenza follow the crashing discord and rest with dramatic effect.

The Fugue is not a complete success. The exposition is very impressive, with a kind of sombre dignity all its own, but the work falls away

afterwards, not only in the episodes, but in some of the treatments of the subject, e.g. :



and even more at the left-hand entry a few bars later. The closing eighteen bars are splendidly sonorous. In spite of its inequalities this fugue gets hold of one in a curious way. Its best parts are so fine that they more than atone for the weaknesses.

Consideration of fugues apart from their preludes is likely to lead to confusion. It will therefore be advisable to put aside the fugues in C minor and F major until we come to the Prelude and Toccata which Bach wrote for them in after years. This leaves us with three important Weimar works—the Passacaglia and Fugue, the Dorian Toccata and Fugue, and the Prelude and Fugue in A major.

Like the Trio-Sonatas, the Passacaglia (X, 214) was written for a two-manual clavicembalo with pedals. We may easily imagine the Sonatas to have been composed with such a slender medium in view, but the Passacaglia is so magnificent as organ music that it requires an effort to think of it as anything else.

The work is supposed to owe something to Buxtehude. Certainly a few passages recall Buxtehude's Chaconne in C minor, but in the size of his scheme and in variety and power of treatment Bach leaves the older composer so far behind as to be out of the reckoning. It is rather too readily assumed that Bach borrowed the idea of a passacaglia-cum-fugue from Buxtehude, modifying it by placing the fugue at the end instead of at the beginning. But when Buxtehude combines the two forms the passacaglia is merely one of the brief sections of a fugue, and is quite an insignificant affair. For example, his C major Prelude and Fugue consists of four loosely defined sections, the fourth being a ground bass of twenty-eight bars, on a theme derived from the fugue subject. In the G minor Prelude and Fugue we have a string of five short movements of which the last is an *ostinato* of thirty-one bars, having no apparent connection with the rest of the work. There is a minimum of relationship between these sketchy attempts and the lengthy and highly organized work of Bach.

We have seen Bach experimenting with forms, and it is easy to imagine him trying his hand at a big two-movement work based on a single theme. Instinctively he must have felt that the order of the movements settled itself. The Fugue, as the freer of the two, should obviously come to provide relief after the Passacaglia's insistence on one theme and one key. Perhaps, however, the Fugue was an after-thought. The Passacaglia ended, Bach may have said, "Still the possibilities are not exhausted. But instead of adding more variations, why not approach the subject from a fresh angle?"

The problem is, how to manage this infusion of new life without destroying the consistency of the work as a whole." He found the solution in a double fugue, one of the subjects being the first half of the Passacaglia theme, the other something quite new—a thrice-repeated little phrase so characteristic and persistent that it pushes its companion into the background, and so prevents the already well-worked motive from becoming monotonous.

The work thus owes nothing to anybody on the formal side. The first half of the theme, however, was borrowed from a "Trio en Passacaille" by André Raison, a French composer, c. 1650-1720. Here is the acorn from which grew so mighty an oak:



As Bach sometimes places the subject at the top, his work is a combination of the passacaglia and chaconne. He is stricter than Buxtehude, in that he remains in one key throughout, whereas Buxtehude freely uses attendant keys. Nor, though he presents the subject disguised by figuration, does Bach become diffuse as does the older writer. Curiously, although he is so much less strict and consistent, Buxtehude's Passacaglia and two Chaconnes are distinctly monotonous, whereas the interest is maintained throughout the Bach work. Buxtehude begins splendidly in each case—the first page of his E minor Chaconne is one of the most expressive things in old music—but he is too ready to fall

back on the complacent type of figuration that spoils the bulk of his output.

Bach's Passacaglia presents so many difficulties in the matter of registration that most organists succumb, and neglect the work. If we are blessed with an organ of ample resource (not only in stops, but in pistons) we may subscribe to the general principle that each variation calls for some change of colour, but if our organ is small or clumsy, we should remind ourselves that the work was written for an instrument of very limited possibilities both in power and variety. The only contrast possible on the clavicembalo was that presented by two manuals, one loud and one soft. Moreover, we find the music full of interest even when played on our own pedal-pianoforte. This being so, it is clear that its success depends a good deal less on the organ-builder than is generally supposed. One point is indisputable: there must be no break in the flow of the piece. If we cannot change the registration without a halt—even the slightest—we must let the registration go. Fortunately a good deal can be done by taking the variations in blocks, so to speak. Thus 1-3, *p* or *pp*; 4-7, *mf* or *mp*; 8-9, *f* or *mf*; 10, R.H. Choir *p*, L.H. Swell, *p*; 11, both hands, Choir; 12, Great and Swell diapasons (easily prepared during 11); 13, full Swell; 14, both hands on Choir, or R.H. Choir, L.H. Swell; 15, both hands on Choir or Swell; 16-20, *ff* or *f*, increasing to full organ for 20. Some such plan as this avoids monotony on the one hand and restlessness on the other, and presents little difficulty on an average organ. The chief trouble will be the avoidance of change or increase of tone on the last note of

the theme in the pedals. Clearly the change should be on the first note. It may be necessary to shorten the last note occasionally in order to prevent it from being affected by manual changes through the couplers. On an organ with a large pedal department of course this difficulty scarcely exists, as we are able to dispense with the couplers in all save the loudest variations. Variation No. 17 is sometimes played as a delicate two-manual affair. But if Nos. 14 and 15 are light and soft, a very quiet treatment of No. 17 makes No. 16 stand out too aggressively. Moreover, it is difficult to get two quiet, well-contrasted manuals ready, and to drop on to them quickly, at the same time reducing the pedal. There is a good deal to be said for making No. 17 loud and brilliant. The laying-out shows that Bach played it on the two manuals of his cembalo. If we adopt the one-manual idea, it is worth while pencilling-in this arrangement of bars 5 and 6, as printed in the Schirmer and Peters editions :

The musical score consists of two systems of music for organ. The top staff (Manuals) has a treble clef and a bass clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff (Pedals) has a bass clef. The first system starts with a bass note, followed by a series of eighth-note chords. The second system begins with a bass note, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern, a eighth-note chord, and a sixteenth-note pattern. The tempo is indicated as "Ped."

The least satisfactory variations are Nos. 14 and 15. They so clearly belong to the cembalo that they seem mere fidgety trifling on the organ, besides which they interrupt the building-up which began at No. 12 and which should be more or less continuous to the end. They may be left out (like superfluous numbers in any other set of variations), and the join easily made, with decided improvement on the score of continuity.

This matter of registration has been dwelt on at some length because, as was said above, there is a tendency to regard the difficulties as all but insuperable on small or ill-equipped organs, with the result that this splendid work is less played than it should be. There are a hundred workable methods, and the foregoing suggestions will do most good if, instead of adopting them, players will spend a quiet half-hour at their consoles improving on them. Probably the greater number will incline to a simple scheme—perhaps an even simpler one than that given. For the sake of completeness I add Schweitzer's views :

"There is no organ work that makes such demands as this in the matter of registration. Each of the twenty sections constructed on the repeated bass must have its characteristic tone-colour, and yet, if disconnectedness is to be avoided, no colour must be too sharply differentiated from its predecessor or successor." \*

Unfortunately these slight changes of tone-colour are usually the very ones that call for a spare hand or an assistant.

\* Schweitzer's "J. S. Bach" (I. 280). (The references to this work apply to the English translation by Ernest Newman.)

The preface to the Schirmer edition of the organ works gives a very elaborate scheme, but the editors hint that the registration may well take second place :

"The player may adopt either of two methods. He may either strive—without wasting much thought on the broader possibilities of grouping—after interesting tonal combinations for effectively setting off the several variations; or he may endeavour, even in these latter, to obtain his effects by means of lines rather than colours, and to present distinctly the construction of the whole composition. This way is probably the better of the two."

On the whole, the more one plays the work, the more one is disposed to consider the music first, and the registration a long way after.

The Passacaglia and Fugue are such a lengthy affair that we may wish to play them separately. In this case, how are we to end the former? The effect of the final chord, with the minor third at the top, is inconclusive. Here are three ways:



(b)

(c)

*molto rit.*

*cres.*

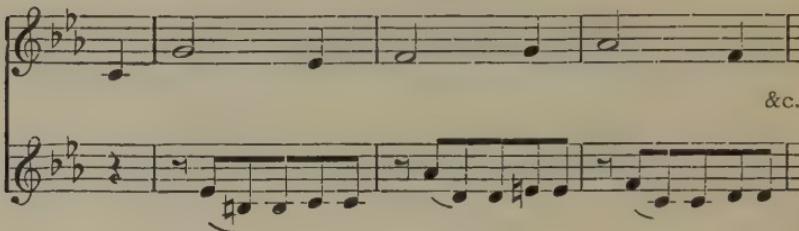
Add Solo Reeds.

The third is not so vandalistic as it appears to be at first sight. It merely gives us a *tierce de Picardie*—a form of close which was always more or less at the discretion of the player.

Coming to the Fugue, if we play it as written the first note of the subject is bound to be lost. There is something striking in this emergence of the subject, but we may safely surmise that had Bach written the work for the organ he would have announced the theme a bar later, preceding it with two crotchet rests. The player who adopts this

plan does a commonsense thing to which only the straitest of purists can object.

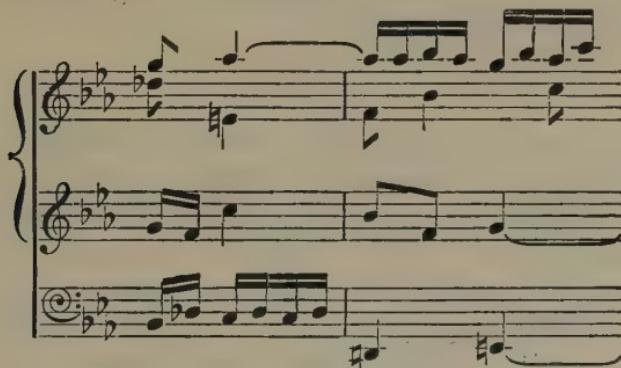
The Fugue is an excellent specimen of a double type in which both subjects are given out together :



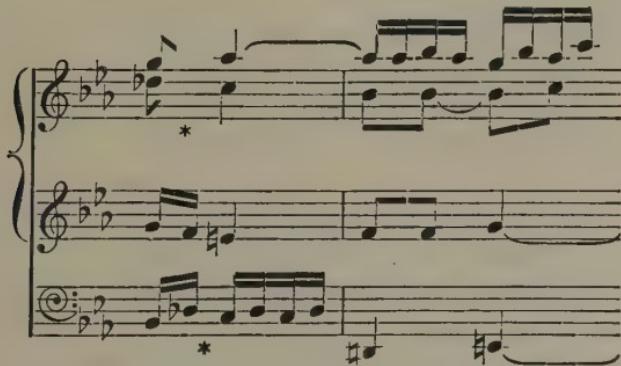
Much of its success is due to the strongly-marked character of the new theme. Had Bach written a semiquaver counter-theme to the Passacaglia subject the result would have been less happy, because the latter would have been the predominant partner, with a result too frequently suggestive of further variations. But the rests in the new theme help it to prominence, and so the centre of interest is shifted sufficiently to establish the Fugue as a new movement.

A good deal may be done in the way of soloing, but the gain is small, and there may even be some loss. A vigorous straightforward treatment seems to be called for. Despite a few weak passages, this is a far finer work than is generally realised. When played after the Passacaglia it must suffer from some lack of freshness in the hearer, and perhaps in the player as well. That is why we should study it and play it as a separate work. Structurally it is so clear that little need be said, but a few points call for mention. Thus, the double shake at bars 101 and 102 was necessary on the cembalo. It is not so on the organ, and sluggish speech on the

part of one or two stops will make it into a hideous noise. In this case we should omit it. Even under the most favourable conditions we shall perhaps do well to shake the upper part only. In bars 92 and 93 we shall save ourselves trouble if we re-write the inner parts for a couple of beats. Of course we ought not to be bothered by this sort of thing :



but we usually are, so we may help ourselves thus :



Consecutive octaves between alto and bass at \*? Yes, but they are very little ones, and (as is fitting with little ones) are seen and not heard.

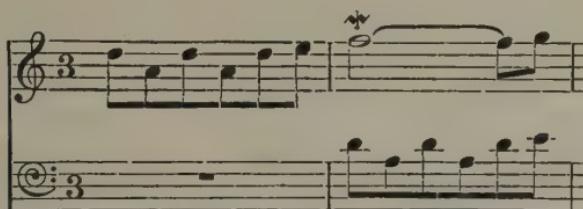
The Neapolitan sixth at bar 117 looks thin, but we shall resist the temptation to fatten it if we remember that the striking effect is made by the chord itself, and is independent of the number of notes employed. It needs no underlining.

The Fugue, like the Passacaglia, is unexpectedly difficult, owing to a few awkward patches, but both movements yield ample return for the trouble, and both grow on the player.

§

Parry, on the ground that "a form which depends so much upon a rhapsodical quality, like a brilliant improvisation, does not gain by too thoughtful and premeditated an air," considers that the Dorian Toccata (X., 196) "is not so interesting as the earlier one in the same key." This seems convincing until we remember that there is nothing of the rhapsody or brilliant improvisation about the F major Toccata—a work surely far superior to the early one in D minor. The fact is, the form itself suffers from "faint individuality," as Corder says in his article on the subject in "Grove." Most modern examples are brilliant and showy, but the old composers applied the label to all sorts of movements. Here, for instance, is the scheme of a five-movement work by Muffat: a majestic *Alla breve*, a quick *Fugato*, a canonic *Adagio*, an *Andante*, and a *Fugato finale* in 12-8 time, very jig-like. One would call it a Suite had not the composer already told us it was a Toccata—one of six from the "Apparatus musico-organistus" (1690). The Dorian work really is more in line with modern examples than is the earlier toccata, being a *moto perpetuo*. It is not

so brilliant as its more popular companion, but there is fine vigour and plenty of interest in other ways. In passing it may be noted that, like the Passacaglia, it contains a link with old French organ music. Pirro points out that the main idea seems to have been suggested by a Duo of André Raison, from whom, as we have seen, Bach borrowed half of his Passacaglia theme. Here is the beginning of Raison's little movement:



The resemblance is not confined to the opening bars.

The Dorian Toccata is one of the few works in which we have Bach's own indications as to the use of the organ. Unfortunately, as in other cases, we are not able to carry them out owing to differences between the organs of his day and those of ours. Our Swell is generally deficient in diapason tone, and our Choir is too often a small collection of solo stops, a very different affair from the Positiv of Bach's time. The two-manual conception of the Toccata can as a rule be realised only by playing the Oberwerk passages on a fairly loud Great and those for Positiv on contrasted Swell stops of about the same power, the manuals being of course

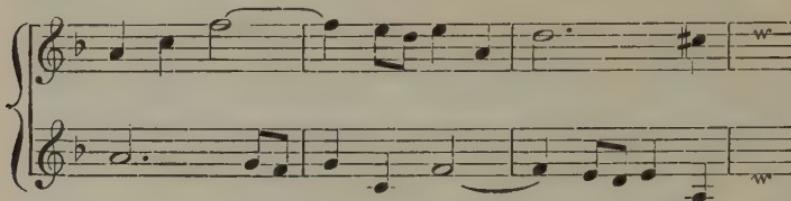
uncoupled. The Pedal should be coupled to Great, unless it is so rich in telling stops as to be independent—an unlikely contingency. The manuals should be coupled together and to the Pedal after the last call for separate use, and the ending worked up to full organ. The effect of the work should suggest the antiphony between two contrasted sections of an orchestra, with a *tutti* at the close. There are not many effects in Bach's organ works more satisfying than the passages where the antiphony is close, especially in the sections over the long grandly-rolling pedal scale :

Brilliant and exciting, too, is the intertwining two-manual passage over the dominant pedal twenty-two bars from the end, and the fine bit of contrary motion a few bars later. Altogether, despite the conventional figure on which it is largely founded, there is a splendid life about this movement. It wears rather better than its more popular and brilliant companion.

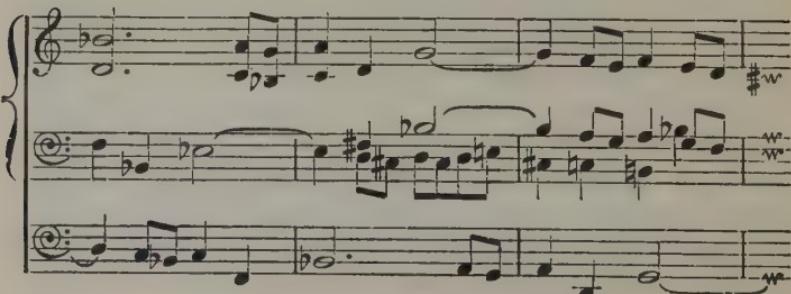
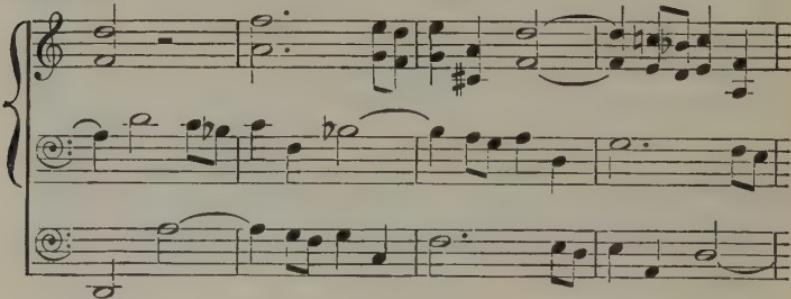
The nobly melancholy Fugue is one of the greatest things in music. It is abstract music raised to its highest point. Even the group of masterpieces Bach wrote later contains nothing more thoroughly purged of display or superficiality of any kind. (In the thematic index at the end of Forkel's "Life of Bach" [English translation of 1820] the E, G, B, and D of the first half of the subject are embellished with inverted mordentes. These may or may not have been in the original. Griepenkerl tells us that the autograph was missing, and that the work as we know it was pieced together from various imperfect copies. We may be thankful that the subject was left free of the twiddles which were probably added by some dashing young capellmeister who thought the subject needed brightening.)

As a mere piece of fugal writing the work is remarkable, though when playing it we shall do well to overlook the science and think only of the music. Parry points out its likeness to the last fugue in Part I of the "Forty-eight," in that the greater part of the interest is provided by development of a fragment that, written casually, later revealed unexpected possibilities. In this case the fragment appears in the second and third bars of the counter-subject. At the *Codetta* preceding the

tenor entry the treble imitates the alto in the sixth above :

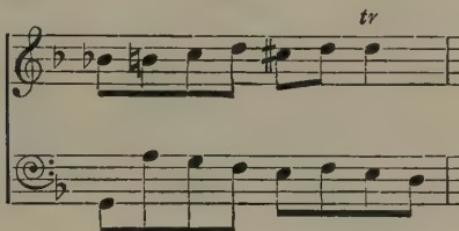


The hint was enough, and Bach proceeded to develop all the episodes save one (the last) from this canonic germ. The result is fifteen canons, all different. Far more important is the fact that this canonic writing leads to some amazingly daring and modern use of passing-notes. Too rarely does ingenuity give us music such as this final canon :



The syncopations in the subject also lead to some very attractive roughnesses.

By the way, all editions agree in giving bar 161 as:

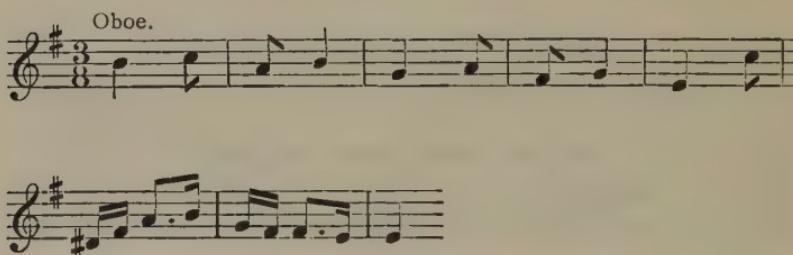


But surely the first C should be sharpened.

This lofty fugue should be played as a voluntary by every organist at least six times in the year. This seems over-frequent, until we remind ourselves of the number of repetitions allowed in the case of very indifferent hymn-tunes and service settings.

Passing from the Dorian Fugue to the Fugue in A major is like stepping from a cathedral into a garden. We find Bach expressing a great variety of moods in his organ works, but nowhere else do we meet with anything like the sunny happiness of the Fugue in A (III., 66). The Prelude is rather conventional in its material, though it may be made pleasant by a very light and delicate treatment. Widor and Schweitzer say of it that "much depends on graceful, smooth execution. It should glide past the hearer like a vision." Unfortunately, they make the vision far too solid by their scheme of registration—foundation stops on the Great, with foundation stops and mixtures on the Swell.

The fugue last discussed is an epic; this is a lyric—not because it is shorter and slighter, but because it is full of the intimate personal feeling that belongs to the lyric. The walking character of the subject must have struck most of us, and the point is of interest because it is a good example of Bach's susceptibility to the pictorial suggestion of words. The origin of the subject is to be found in the introduction to the Cantata, "Walk in the way of faith," where this theme is treated fugally:



We may be sure that what Schweitzer calls "the curious step-rhythm" was suggested by the word "walk."

Spitta thinks the A major Fugue was written very soon after the Cantata, though its present form belongs to a date considerably later. The earlier form (printed as an appendix to Vol. II. of Peters) was in 3-8 time, and inferior in a good many respects. We miss especially the effective high pedal passages.

The Schirmer edition and the later issue of the Novello edition give a reading that may be questioned. They sharpen the treble D in bar 5

of the first pedal entry, and also omit the naturals to the G's in the following passage:

Both in the early autograph and in the two later copies the D and the G's have the natural. The sharps quite destroy the beautiful mellow feeling of the passage. The Schirmer edition gives a singularly clumsy form of the pedal arpeggio at the end.

We are not able to subscribe to all the more emotional of Spitta's descriptions of Bach's works, but we may do so in this case. He says:

"The [A major] fugue is quite unique . . . Bach has given it something of a peculiarly feminine character, and this runs through every thread of

it with pure depth of feeling. Broken harmonies in the counterpoint, soft sixths, and passages of thirds, breathe into it something of the character of the G major aria in the Cantata, 'Walk in the way of faith'; the playful suggestions of stretto are quite delightful, till at last one is fully developed with infinite grace. From bar 135 the feeling acquires a wonderful intensity; the counterpoint seems to cling in a loving embrace to the theme, which from bar 161 appears again in smiling beauty."

It is to such works as the A major Fugue, the "Little Organ Book," and the lively dances of the Suites, that we owe the personal attachment most of us feel for Bach. We speak of him familiarly as "old Bach" because of this, and not on account of his wig or period. Few of the great composers enable us to get on such terms. We shall never apply the "old" to Beethoven, Brahms, or Wagner, for example. They unbent too rarely, and with something of an effort, whereas Bach was never more natural than when expressing himself through small forms and genial, intimate style.

#### IV.—THE “LITTLE ORGAN BOOK.”

The Bach revival has had two phases. The musical world of a generation ago, as the stream of rescued works poured forth year after year, was naturally disposed to acclaim the two qualities of Bach that first leapt to the eye—his fecundity and skill. To-day we are well in the second phase, and accent is now laid on the emotional side of his work—so much so that there is sometimes a tendency to read into the music more than is actually there. Before many years are past we shall see Bach whole. His skill will be none the less appreciated when we recognise that in all but a few cases it was a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Indeed, bearing in mind his amazing technique, the final verdict will be one of surprise that Bach so rarely fell into the trap that proved fatal to the more adept of his successors—the use of skill for skill’s sake.

It was in some ways unfortunate that the first of Bach’s works to become known in England were fugues. We have not yet recovered from the resultant tendency to fasten on to this part of his output at the expense of the rest. A surprisingly large proportion of musicians are still unaware that the avowed fugues are far outnumbered by the movements that are not fugal or in which fugal writing is merely incidental. How many organists realise that of the nineteen Books of organ

music comprised in the Novello edition *only nine* are labelled as collections of preludes and fugues? Even these nine contain a good number of pieces that are not fugues.

The handicap under which the Chorale Preludes have suffered here is shown by the fact that the first complete English edition was published only a few years ago, long after the other organ works had become familiar, and in some cases hackneyed.

There were reasons for the slowness with which the Chorale Preludes have made their way among us. In many cases the melodic bases were either unknown or difficult to trace in the texture of the music. Even where the tune was familiar or easily followed, the emotional significance of the movement was missed through ignorance of the text. Further confusion was caused by some tunes being sung in this country to hymns contrary in sentiment to those Bach had in mind when writing the preludes on those chorales. Here is a case in point. For generations we have associated a well-known tune of Luther with the Advent hymn "Great God, what do I see and hear?" Turning to Bach's Prelude thereon we find, not the solemn movement we expect, but a piece singularly light-hearted—almost trivial. The explanation is that the Germans sang the melody to two texts, one dealing with the last Judgment ("Es ist gewisslich an der Zeit"—"'Tis sure that awful Time will come"), and the other a thanksgiving hymn ("Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein"—"Be glad now, all ye Christian men"). The organ piece is concerned with the latter. Bach has used the tune in its Advent aspect in the cantata

"Wachet, betet," giving it to two trumpets in the accompaniment to the bass recitative, "Ah, shall not this great day of wrath."

A further example occurs in the case of the chorale sung in England to the Passion hymn, "O sinner, lift the eye of faith." Bach wrote no less than ten Preludes on this melody, but the organist who goes to them for a Passontide voluntary will be disappointed. All the settings are festive, because in Bach's day the tune was sung to a metrical version of the "Gloria in Excelsis."

Until recently not more than one English organist in a hundred knew what Bach was trying to say in the Chorale Preludes as a whole. We were confronted with collections of pieces bearing German titles, with no hint as to pace, power, or registration. Only occasionally could the thematic basis be identified and followed. In many cases it was even impossible to say whether the music was intended to be joyful or otherwise. We need not be surprised that the puzzle was laid aside in favour of Preludes and Fugues that carried their message on their face. The Chorale Preludes have not yet overcome this early handicap, but they are now in a fair way to do so, thanks to the help afforded by the English versions, and by such recent additions to Bach literature as the volumes by Pirro, Schweitzer, Parry, and Sanford Terry. It is safe to say that no organist who has persevered and got at the heart of these wonderful works will ever rank them lower than Bach's other organ music. He will be more likely to rank them higher, by virtue of their intimate character, their diversity of form, and their amazingly wide emotional range.

As we have seen, variations on chorales were among Bach's earliest attempts at composition. He worked pretty constantly in this field; in fact, he ended his career, as he began it, with an organ piece of the type, dictating a chorale prelude as he lay blind on his death-bed. Altogether there are nearly a hundred of such works collected by Bach himself into five sets. The first of these—the “Orgelbüchlein”—now falls due in our chronological survey, most of its numbers having been written at Weimar.

The “Little Organ Book” (XV.) has been one of the most discussed of all Bach's organ works. There are several reasons for this—some musical, some historical and personal. The personal interest is twofold. Not only is the music unusually intimate, even for Bach: there is the added interest that attaches to unfinished works of art; for, as we shall see, the collection is but a small part of a big scheme that was never carried out.

The title-page shows that Bach's first aim was educational:

“The ‘Little Organ Book,’ wherein instruction is given to a beginning organist to work out a chorale in every style, also to perfect himself in the study of the pedal, the pedal being treated quite *obligato* throughout in the chorales herein contained. To the honour of the Lord Most High, and that my neighbour may be taught thereby. Autore Joanne Sebast. Bach. p.t. Capellæ Magistro S. [erenissimi] P. [rincipis] R. [egnantis] Anhaltini-Cothicensis.”

The reference to Cöthen led Spitta and subsequent biographers to conclude that the autograph

was written at that place. But Prof. Sanford Terry, in the *Musical Times* of March, 1917, points out that the expression *pro tempore* (*p.t.*) has evidently been misinterpreted. Bach secured the Cöthen appointment before being released from his Weimar duties. (He had resigned partly through pique at Drese's appointment to the Capellmeister's post.) For some time the Duke refused to accept his resignation. On November 6, 1717, Bach peremptorily demanded immediate release—which was very like a peppery composer; whereupon his employer had him imprisoned—which was no less like a Grand Duke. Bach remained under arrest until December 2, when he was allowed to leave for Cöthen.

Prof. Terry suggests that Bach described himself as *pro tempore* Capellmeister at Cöthen because, although he had been appointed, he was detained at Weimar under protest, with no certainty of being able to take up his new work. It is thus extremely probable that Bach passed some of his four weeks' imprisonment in planning and making a fair copy of the "Little Organ Book."

This autograph, now in the National Library at Berlin, contains a hundred and eighty-four pages. Bach intended the collection to consist of a hundred and sixty-four pieces on a hundred and sixty-one tunes, three of these being used twice. He allowed one page for each movement, writing at the head of each page the title of the chorale to be treated thereon. This drastic rationing led to trouble in the case of some of the longer movements, pieces of paper being pasted on, or the tablature—a kind of letter notation—being employed. Of the hundred and sixty-four pieces planned, only forty-six were composed.

Spitta tells us that in 1879 he found another autograph, which had been in the possession of Mendelssohn, who had cut out several leaves and given them to his *fiancée* and Clara Schumann. This copy was obviously earlier than the one we have been considering, and contained about eight pieces fewer. Moreover, the order was quite different—an important point, as we shall see.

So little was it realised that Bach had any definite plan in view, that only two editions--the original Bachgesellschaft and the Novello—retain the original order. Some editors have rearranged the pieces in alphabetical sequence, while others have mixed them with other chorale preludes. Until the appearance of Prof. Sanford Terry's three articles on the subject in the *Musical Times* of January, February, and March, 1917, it was held that Bach intended the collection to be a kind of musical Christian Year. As left by him, the book falls clearly into sections for Advent, Christmas, New Year, Epiphany, Passiontide, Easter, and Whitsuntide. Further subdivisions are suggested by Prof. Terry. But as all but a few of the forty-six completed pieces are in the early part of the book, this leaves practically the whole of the numbers from fifty to a hundred and sixty-four untouched. Nobody seems to have wondered what Bach had in his mind when arranging these later chorales. It was left to Prof. Terry to work out a scheme that certainly seems convincing, both in itself, and because it is just the kind of thing that we may imagine Bach doing. The theory set out in the *Musical Times* articles is that Bach intended the book to be in two parts, the first consisting of sixty movements dealing with the Church's seasons

and festivals, the second and larger portion illustrating the Christian life. There is no need to go into further details. Readers will find the whole hypothetical plan in the first of the three articles referred to.

Usually there is little room for speculation as to why a composer has left a work unfinished: death has applied the closure. But how came it that this ambitious scheme, planned and got well under way while Bach was still a young man, was not completed? Schweitzer thinks that the chorales treated were those that lent themselves best to the pictorial treatment Bach had in view, and that he found the bulk unsuitable. But, as Mr. Ernest Newman points out, we can hardly ascribe to mere chance the fact that the most workable tunes should all appear in a lump at the beginning of the book. Moreover, Bach's aptitude for seizing on and illustrating some picturesque word was not likely to fail him here, where it had such scope for effective employment. We need not look far for an explanation. Bach either tired of the task or never found the leisure and the right mood happening in conjunction. The completed part was of practical use, covering as it did the Church's year, whereas the remainder was a pious and rather fanciful extra. The first enthusiasm over, there was little inducement to spend time over work of slight utility in the regular duties of an organist.

A great deal—perhaps a great deal too much—has been made of the pictorial features of these preludes. In all but a few cases the method is that of a single plain presentation of the chorale with an accompaniment in which a figure of a

descriptive character is employed, sometimes as an *ostinato*. The figure is intended to illustrate the general sentiment of the hymn, but we are not surprised to find Bach occasionally allowing himself to be captured by a picturesque phrase—sometimes even a single word—rather than by the text as a whole. Sometimes this trait has led to a misunderstanding of the sentiment of a movement, as will be shown later.

Both Schweitzer and Pirro have gone very thoroughly into the construction of the characteristic figures used in the Cantatas as well as in the organ works—Bach's “musical language,” as Schweitzer calls it. Readers who wish to study the subject in detail are referred to chapters xxi.-xxiii. of Schweitzer's “J. S. Bach” and chapters i.-vi. and x. of Pirro's “L'Esthetique de Jean-Sébastien Bach.” (When will someone give us a translation of this fine work?) For our present purpose the quotation of a few of the more definite motives will suffice. All are to be found in the “Little Organ Book.”

Bach expresses grief in two ways. Here is the little chromatic phrase used with such poignant effect in “Das alte Jahr vergangen ist” (“The Old Year hath passed away”):



The other “grief” motive is diatonic, and its chief point lies in the two-note grouping. A good example of one of its forms appears in the prelude on the Passiontide hymn “O Lamm

Gottes, unschuldig" ("O Lamb of God, Saviour"):



(The phrasing is Bach's.) At the right slow pace, the effect is that of a series of sighs. See also the long chorus which ends the first part of the "St. Matthew" Passion—"O man, thy heavy sin lament"—where the figure persists in the accompaniment throughout.

Sometimes the expression is mainly through rhythm. Syncopation is employed to depict exhaustion or lassitude, e.g., the bass of "Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund" ("When on the Cross the Saviour hung"), which is syncopated throughout on this plan:



Other instances will be found in the pedal part of the preludes beginning on pages 53 and 76.

The motive of adoration and gladness is also dependent chiefly on its rhythm. Here is the form used in "Herr Gott, nun sei gepreiset" ("Lord God, now we praise Thee"):



For modifications of this figure see the pedal parts on pages 15, 105, and 119. The third of these examples, by the by, has until lately been entirely misunderstood. The hymn is one for the dying, the first verse being as follows :

"Hark!" a voice saith, "All are mortal,  
Yea, all flesh must fade as grass,  
Only through Death's gloomy portal  
To a better life ye pass,  
And this body formed of clay,  
Here must languish and decay,  
Ere it rise in glorious might,  
Fit to dwell with saints in light."

Speaking of the little piece illustrative of this hymn, Spitta says: "What tender melancholy lurks in the chorale 'Alle Menschen müssen sterben' ('All mankind alike must die'), what an indescribable expression, for instance, arises in the last bar from the false relation between C sharp and C, and the almost imperceptible ornamentation of the melody!" And Ernst Naumann, who edited the Breitkopf edition, taking the same view, marked the piece *serioso*. But with our knowledge of Bach's system of motives, we are able to see that the prelude is concerned not with death, but with resurrection. Instead of taking the obvious course of writing a dirge, Bach looked at the last two lines, and accompanied the chorale with the "joy" motive, which appears without break

in the pedal part, and in 3rds and 6ths in the left hand, thus :

The direction in the Novello edition—*lento e tranquillo*—is quite in keeping with this idea, as it expresses a contemplative joy. The piece is no less effective played with fair pace and power.

Bach has yet two more “joy” motives—a series of quavers or semiquavers founded on scale-passages and a phrase with a strongly-marked rhythm. The former is usually combined with other features. The rhythmical figure is used in the inner parts of the prelude on ‘‘Mit Fried’ und

Freud' ich fahr' dahin" ("In peace and joy I now depart")—a metrical version of "Nunc Dimittis":

*Lento e tranquillo.*

For a particularly good example of Bach's use of this material turn to the prelude on the Easter

hymn, "Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag" ("The glorious day has dawned"), where the very telling canon between the two outer parts is filled in by the rhythmical "joy" motive in 3rds and 6ths. The pace being quicker, the notation is different from that of the "Nunc Dimittis," but the idea is the same:

*Allegro moderato.*

MAN. I.

The figure is used also on page 117 to express the joy of confidence in the Divine goodness, and its rhythm is the main feature in the gay prelude on "Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich" ("The day that is so joyful"). The gaiety, by the way, comes out only when the piece is played very quickly and cleanly.

Bach's fondness for programme music led him to make use of a number of motives which appeal as much to the eye as to the ear—sometimes even more so. But we must beware of attaching too much importance to some of them. For example, everybody knows that he uses a downward-plunging pedal part in "Durch Adam's Fall ist ganz verderbt" ("Through Adam's fall mankind fell too"). The casual reader says, "How naive!" or,

"What an absurd attempt at realism!" Even so sympathetic a critic as Parry calls it, "A semi-humorous stroke of realistic suggestion," and describes it as "quaint." Yet the pedal part is but one of several constituents. Let us look at the first two bars:

*Lento.*

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef and 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of *f*. The middle staff is in bass clef and 4/4 time, representing the basso continuo. The bottom staff is also in bass clef and 4/4 time. The music begins with a bass note followed by eighth-note patterns in both hands. The harmonic progression involves frequent changes between major and minor chords, indicated by the use of sharps and flats.

The musical score continues with three staves. The top staff is in treble clef and 4/4 time. The middle staff is in bass clef and 4/4 time, representing the basso continuo. The bottom staff is also in bass clef and 4/4 time. The music continues with eighth-note patterns and harmonic changes, maintaining the rhythmic and harmonic complexity established in the first two bars.

Did Bach mean nothing by the close juxtaposition of the major and minor 3rds that accompany the first note of the chorale and appear in nearly every bar? And the character of the pedal leap is far more important than its direction. In almost every case it is a 7th, and usually a diminished 7th. The chromatic harmony is also a factor,

especially in such passages as the fourth bar from the end, where we pass from G minor through E minor to G major :

Hearing this piece for the first time one is scarcely more conscious of the bass than of the other parts. It is the total effect that is so striking, and undue attention to the bass weakens the emotional appeal because it makes one think of a merely physical fall. (Strauss uses the drop of a 7th in the bass to depict the hanging of Till Eulenspiegel. In this case the physical aspect is perhaps in keeping. Strauss's illustration is realistic: Bach's is symbolical.)

Similarly, commentators are given to emphasising the fact that in the Easter chorale, "Erstanden ist

der heilige Christ" ("Risen is the holy Christ"), the pedal part consists chiefly of upward leaps of a 4th or 5th. They seize on this and tell us that Bach means it to represent the Resurrection. But if we look at the *whole* of the bass we shall see that no less than six of the fifteen leaps are downward—which is certainly a queer way of expressing a rising! The point about the bass is that the leaps are with but two exceptions perfect 5ths and 4ths—the boldest of intervals. The inner parts express joy and animation by scale-passages. When these passages rise they do so not in order to be pictorial, but because a rising scale is naturally more expressive of joy than a descending one. Here are the opening bars:

*Allegro.*

It is obviously a mistake to focus the attention on the pedal part.)

Again, Schweitzer says that "the symbolism of the prelude on 'Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot' ('These are the holy ten commandments') is rather primitive. It consists in the tenfold recurrence in the pedal of the first melodic period."

The number is more than ten, counting the inversions. Without them it is less, so there is

something wrong with the arithmetic. As the motive—a diminished form of the first line of the chorale—appears in the two inner parts as well as in the bass, it is clear that Bach was expressing the idea of insistence, order, dogma—anything but statistics.

This programmatic side of the Chorale Preludes will crop up from time to time in connection with certain works, so there is no need to discuss it further here. Moreover, important as it is, we must avoid undue stress on it. After all, these pieces must stand or fall as music. If any reader hitherto unacquainted with the "Little Organ Book" has reached this point feeling that Bach's choice and use of descriptive materials are likely to lead to mechanical rather than expressive results, he may be asked to keep an open mind till we have examined the work in detail. Before doing this, however, we must pause for a few moments on two of the most striking features, the use of canon and ground bass.

§

Thanks to the old theorists who, for want of something better to do, wrote all sorts of ingenious canons that had no more relation to music than acrostics have to poetry, the canon form is still regarded as little more than a scientific device. The reader who doubts this is advised to read the article on the subject in "Grove," and the second half of Prout's "Double Counterpoint and Canon." In both he will find the minimum of reference to the expressive possibilities of the form. Yet many works, new and old, give us ample proof of this expressive power. We need only to recall one modern example—a very striking one, and now,

happily, familiar—Franck's Symphony. Nobody can hear the canonic portions of the first and last movements without being aware that the result of the device is an increase in the emotional intensity. In the first movement the canonic treatment accentuates the feeling of struggle; in the *Finale* it induces a kind of headlong impetuosity that makes the splendid, joyous theme more exultant than ever.

Apart from this intensifying power, of course, a good canon pleases both mind and ear by the ease with which it overcomes a technical problem. Indeed, we may go farther, and claim that there is actual beauty—even emotional appeal—in the mastery of obstacles. We speak of the beauty of form; what is that but beauty of technique? These things being so, we need not be surprised to find that the canonic preludes in the "Little Organ Book" are among the most striking in the set. There are eight of them,\* and in variety both of method and expression they are remarkable. In the first of the Advent pieces ("Gottes Sohn ist kommen") we have a canon in the octave between treble and tenor, with two free parts, one entirely in crotchets and one in quavers. The tenor is played by the pedals with an 8-ft. trumpet against an 8-ft. principal on the manual. These directions are by Bach. The Novello edition suggests the playing of the left-hand part on a second manual with a 16-ft. stop as well—an effective arrangement. There is a delightful flow about this piece when played at the quietly-festive pace demanded.

\* Spitta makes the number nine by including "Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend," which is an example of free canonic imitation rather than a real canon.

(The direction *Andante* perhaps implies too deliberate a movement.) As examples of Bach's freedom, note that the first four of the six pedal phrases end on a discord. Here is the close of the first, the pedal part being written in the tenor in order to show the harmony at a glance:

The alto part has to keep moving in a somewhat narrow field at times, but there is no sense of monotony when the piece is properly registered, because the centre of interest is so plainly the chorale, especially the tenor version.

Coming to the Christmas section, we find the same method employed in the piece on "In dulci jubilo." This is easily one of the best of all Bach's chorale preludes, on the score of both skill and effect. Not only have we a canon in the octave between treble and tenor, but the two free parts are also in canon during the first half of the movement. The result of this double allowance of ingenuity is not a pedantic essay, but a piece of

singular brightness. The writing shows a great advance on that in the prelude mentioned above. There is far more enterprise and freedom in the accompanying voices, and Bach is never at a loss. The gaiety and grace suggest Mozart's canonic writing at its best. Editions vary considerably in their laying-out of this piece. In some cases the editors have retained the original position of the pedal part, which involves an F sharp above the stave—a note found on few English organs.

In the Mendelssohn autograph the pedal stop is marked 8-ft. The Novello edition, in giving the pedal part an octave lower, retains the original effect by indicating a 4-ft. stop. As a rule, the manual parts are given to one keyboard. The Novello edition\* suggests two, but the arrangement—effective as it is in showing the canonic working of the alto and (real) bass—is hardly practicable, as it calls for some stretches that few hands will be able to manage.

It is a question whether the simultaneous use of three notes against two was intended by Bach. Notation in those days was an approximate affair in many respects.† For this reason, Naumann's treatment of the repeated notes in the Breitkopf & Härtel edition is probably justified. It certainly makes the whole piece brighter rhythmically, besides being far easier to play. Here are a few

\* In Book XV., that is. In Book XIII. it is laid out for one manual besides being more conveniently arranged in other respects. It should be explained that Books XIII. and XIV. contain some Chorale Preludes that appear also in the other volumes, and that, in the case of duplicated pieces, the editing and arrangement are often different.

† The work under notice provides us with a good example. For the triplets Bach writes quavers instead of the crotchets called for by the minim unit.

specimen bars from the Novello and the Breitkopf & Härtel editions. The player who wishes to adopt the latter reading can easily do so by playing on one manual throughout, and changing repeated crotchets into alternate crotchets and quavers:

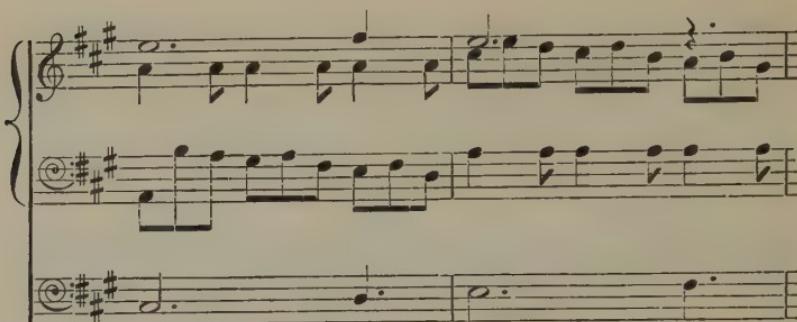
Man. I.

Man. II.

4 ft.

Man. 8 & 4 ft.

4 ft.



The last two bars are most conveniently played thus:

It is unfortunate that this prelude--perhaps the most engaging little organ-piece Bach ever wrote--should suffer from being set forth so often in a form that makes it appear forbiddingly difficult. It is by no means easy as laid out by Naumann, but the player is encouraged by being met half-way, as well as by the clearness of the appeal to the eye.

Among the Passontide preludes are four canons of great interest and effect. That on "O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig" ("O Lamb of God all Holy"), begins as a double canon, but after the first

few bars resolves itself into a canon at the fifth above between tenor (pedal 8-ft.) and alto. The free parts are beautiful examples of the long-drawn sinuous melodies of which Bach seemed to have an inexhaustible supply. Here, as in the canons already discussed, we find the phrases of the chorale usually ending on a discord. Even the final cadence has an element of surprise owing to the keynote F with which the leading voice ends being taken as the third of the relative minor, and sustained while the second voice and the free parts effect a plagal cadence:

(Tenor prominent.)  
*Adagio.*

Ped.  
8 ft.

C:

C:

The tiny piece on "Christe, du Lamm Gottes" ("Agnus Dei") is a canon at the twelfth above between tenor and treble. The tune, however, is

almost lost, the ear being occupied with the scale-passage of six notes with which the three free parts are occupied. This sixteen-bar Prelude is likely to be passed over, partly on account of its brevity, and perhaps even more because of its passing-note roughness. On acquaintance it becomes curiously attractive. Not often is so much suggested in so small a space.

Its successor, "Christus, der uns selig macht" (the text of which is a version of the ancient Latin Passion hymn *Patris Sapientia*), is even more discordant. Bach evidently had in mind the second half of the stanza:

See the sinless Son of God  
Shameful mockings bearing,  
Bitter taunts, a cruel rod,  
Doom of sinners sharing.

Again we have a feint at a double canon, but after the first few bars the imitation between the free parts is fragmentary. The chromatic scale-figure with which Bach so often accompanies reference to the Crucifixion is a powerful factor throughout. This is one of the most relentlessly discordant pieces in all Bach. In order to bring out its almost savage quality it should be played *ff* with a very powerful pedal reed, and at a pace so deliberate that none of its asperities are smoothed over.

The Prelude on "Hilf, Gott, dass mir's gelinge" ("Help, God, that I may achieve") is a puzzle at first sight. It is a canon at the fifth below between treble and alto, with a tenor part in semiquaver triplets which run cheerfully hither and thither over three octaves, and a bass hardly less enterprising though slower of gait. Why this

animation—even gaiety—in a Passontide prelude? If we look at the hymn we see that Bach, ever susceptible to words, evidently seized on "fröhlich" and "singen." The result is a piece of great charm and originality, though these qualities are somewhat at the mercy of the registration. The flowing tenor part must be played with stops sufficiently telling to be distinct in the lower notes, but not over-prominent in the higher. The best effect will perhaps be produced by a light 8-ft. and 4-ft. on the Swell or enclosed Choir, with the box slightly open when the part is low and closed when it rises above the chorale.

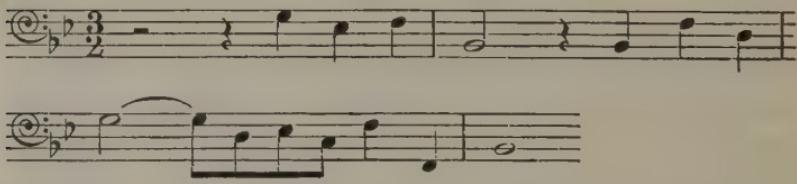
Of the two remaining canons that on "Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag" was quoted on page 119, and the one on "Liebster Jesu" is a straightforward little piece that calls for no comment.

The student who feels disposed to join in the popular cry of "down with rules" will do well to examine these canonic preludes. Let him learn to play them fluently (they are far from easy), with a well-schemed registration and with the text of the hymn at the back of his mind, and he will see that the most stringent rules, so far from hampering a composer's delivery, may even make it more striking. But of course the composer must have something to deliver.

As a general principle in registering such pieces we should avoid over-insistence on the canon. The *cantus firmus* should be prominent, with the imitation as a kind of shadow thrown against the free parts. As Schweitzer says, "the piece is not there for the sake of the canon, but the canon for the sake of the piece."

The examples of ground bass need not detain us long. Bach's use of the device in the "Little Organ Book" is so free that we may regard it merely as a development of the descriptive-motive idea. We have seen something of the kind in the preludes on "Durch Adam's Fall" and "Erstanden ist der heil'ge Christ." Composers from a very early date must have realised that the ground bass held considerable dramatic possibilities. They began writing variations over a bass as exercises in skill, finding a repeated bass a very easy way of obtaining the homogeneity that so often escaped them at other times. But it must soon have become obvious that given a really significant bass the form might become a powerful medium of expression. The short step to a descriptive bass was easily taken, and there resulted a form which is very much in favour with modern composers, though of course it is now amplified in countless ways. It is a long road from some of the examples in the "Little Organ Book" to Elgar's "Carillon," but the road is plain.

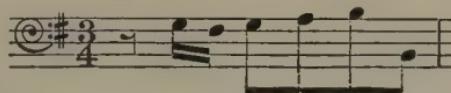
Perhaps the finest specimen is the Prelude on "Heut triumphiret Gottes Sohn" ("To-day triumphed God's Son"). The pedal part consists of a five-fold delivery of this vigorous theme :



with a kind of *Coda* under the final Alleluia of the chorale. The figure is modified slightly at each

appearance, and is used in various keys. It is no doubt suggestive of trampling death under foot, or (as some commentators think) of treading the wine-press—a Biblical expression used in a good many Passontide and Easter hymns. In support of the latter view it is worth noting that in the Cantata "God goeth up," a reference to the wine-press is accompanied by a figure very similar to the first portion of that quoted above.

In "Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ" ("We thank Thee, Jesus Christ") we have a pedal *ostinato* on this figure:

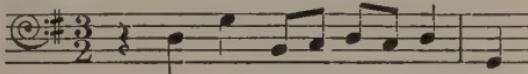


with a liberal use of a joy motive in the manual parts.

But perhaps the most picturesque bass is that of "In dir ist Freude," a hymn for New Year's Day:

In Thee is gladness  
Amid all sadness,  
Jesu, Sunshine of my heart!

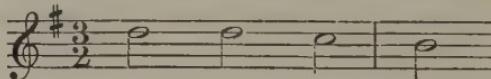
The pedals deliver the theme:



nineteen times, besides making a few references to the chorale melody.

There is good ground for Pirro's suggestion that Bach played this motive with a 4-ft. glockenspiel added to the ordinary registration. This delightfully naive piece may be made brilliantly effective with loud stops, but a light scheme is worth

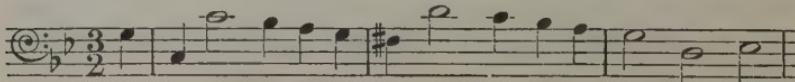
considering. The writing for the left hand suggests the earlier methods of Bach in making excursions to the bottom of the keyboard, sometimes hanging round the pedal part, with heavy effect when loud stops are used. Here is a plan that will be found effective on most organs. A rather soft Great (8-ft. flute or stopped diapason) coupled to Swell, very soft 2-ft. (no 4-ft. stops). Box closed most of the time or opened so slightly that the 2-ft. is never more than a kind of delicate tingle. Pedal coupled to Great, with soft 8-ft. and 16-ft., and the Choir clarinet coupled for the *ostinato* only. The pace should be quick. The whole movement then suggests bells, not only by means of the registration, but also because of the manual scale-passages and the constantly-repeated :



of the chorale melody. The shakes at the end, which are irritating when the piece is played rather slowly and loudly, become delightful under this light treatment. Played at a good speed, this prelude is a fine technical study.

Of the remaining ground basses, mention need be made of one only—that of “Puer natus in Bethlehem” (“A Babe is born in Bethlehem”). It is surmised that Bach meant it to depict the bowings of the Magi as they advanced to the cradle.

If this is so, its appeal is to the eye rather than to the ear:



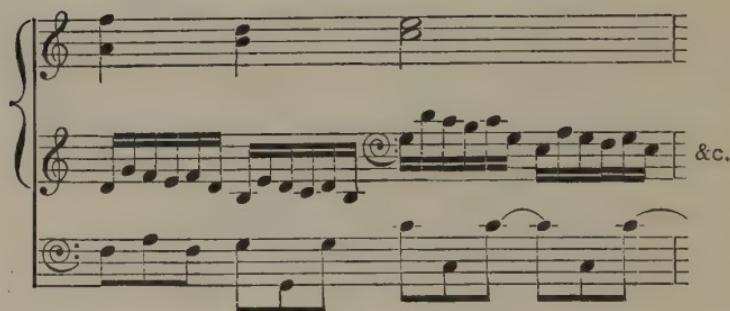
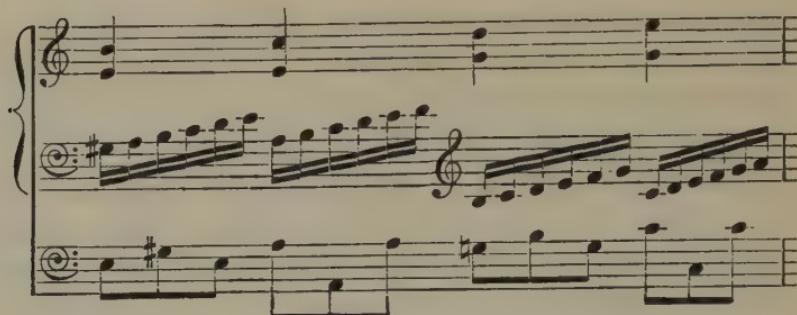
An alternative suggestion is that the piece is a lullaby, the bass representing a rocking of the cradle, but the character of the music as a whole does not support this view.

Another Prelude on which opinions differ as to the poetic intent is that on "Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf" ("Lord God, now open wide Thy heaven"). The text is a kind of death-bed meditation. Some authorities say that the pedal part represents a knocking at the door of Heaven; others, that it figures the weary steps of the pilgrims; yet others, that the continuously rolling left-hand passage is descriptive of the sick man's suffering. The main point, surely, is that the combination of the two supplies an urgent and expressive undercurrent to the melody. This is one of the most beautiful works in the set, and makes a wide appeal without regard to any programme. The finish and consistency of the writing are alike remarkable. Here is the first phrase:

*Allegretto.*  
Man. I.

Man. II.

*mp*



The remainder of the preludes in the "Little Organ Book" fall roughly into two groups. In one the chorale is developed into a long-drawn florid melody, in the other and far larger group we find the tune stated with little or no embellishment against a polyphonic background of a more or less descriptive character. Of the three pieces of the former type one, "O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross" ("O man, thy grievous sin bemoan"), is well known and calls for no comment beyond a remark as to the importance of playing

it *very* slowly. The little piece on "Das alte Jahr vergangen ist" ("The old year hath passed away") is perhaps even more expressive, owing to the poignancy of its harmony and a certain broken character in its utterance brought about by the occasional resting of the under voices. Note that this is one of the preludes in which Bach does not reproduce the feeling of the text as a whole. The hymn is an expression of thankfulness for preservation during the past year, but Bach was captured by the first line, and never got beyond the word "vergangen." The third Prelude of the arabesque type, that on "Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein" ("When we are in deepest need"), is so simple and diatonic that a casual playing over leaves one with an impression that there is nothing in it. Its really touching character is revealed only on full acquaintance. Observe too that the three simple supporting parts carry out the idea of the text by being based on the opening phrase of the melody. All these three pieces have their florid melodic line made still more elaborate by numerous ornaments. At the risk of being called a vandal I venture to suggest that most of the ornaments may well be omitted. They belong to the clavecin rather than to the organ, and they add a great deal to the technical difficulty without contributing anything notable on the expressive side. On the contrary, in some cases they induce a trivial and showy effect. Moreover, they are as a whole obsolete, and they sometimes give an antiquated effect to music which is still vital. The most we

can safely do is to make use of a judicious selection. After all, such things were always more or less *ad libitum*, so that in omitting some of them we are doing no more than exercising a traditional right of choice.

As a rule, the preludes with the melody delivered plainly in the treble speak for themselves. Among the more pictorial examples attention may be drawn to two in which scale-passages are employed to suggest flight. In "Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schaar" ("From heaven came the angel host") the angelic flight is represented by rapid scale-passages in the inner parts and by a slower one in the bass. This piece can hardly be played too rapidly. Turning to the hymn for the dying, "Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig" ("O how cheating, O how fleeting"), we find this very different kind of flight expressed also by two inner voices moving scalewise. But here the pedal part is significant in quite another way. Its short three-note comments, ending in every case with a falling octave, seem to be quietly insisting on the words "wie *nichtig*."

Many of the preludes, especially those in which the expression is general rather than particular, lend themselves to several methods of performance. Perhaps the finest piece of polyphony in the book is the Prelude on "Christum wir sollen loben schon" ("Christ whom all the world praises"), in which the chorale melody is in the alto, slightly ornamented and surrounded by three parts full of interest. The hymn is the ancient office hymn for Christmas, "A solis ortus cardine," the plainsong melody being one of those modernized for Lutheran purposes. A very good version will

be found in the "English Hymnal" (No. 18). The tune is quite lost in Bach's treatment. Here are the opening bars:

*Adagio.*

This piece may be played *mf* or very loudly with equally good effect, provided the pace be so moderate as to give the splendid counterpoint full scope. But few will be tempted to play it fast —so many interesting things happen on the way. It is a fine example of great music in a small compass, being, for all its bigness, only fifteen bars in length. The pedal part is worth looking at alone for its insistent rhythm and its wide sweep.

The Prelude on "Jesu, meine Freude" ("Jesu, my joy") may be played effectively in three ways. It is well suited with a big mass of diapason tone, or by soft expressive stops. Best of all, however, is the playing of the beautiful tenor on a separate manual with a stop of the same power as that used for the other voices, but of a different colour. The tenor part then comes to the surface from time to time in a fascinating way.

But the whole set gives great scope for registration, although most of the numbers are well able to dispense with anything beyond a quite simple scheme.

The reader to whom these works are new may be warned against a hasty opinion based on a reading through, especially at the pianoforte. No other works of Bach yield up so little of their secret on a first acquaintance. As Parry says (after describing it as "a lovable little collection") :

"There is hardly any work of Bach's which brings the hearer into more intimate relations with him, or one more suffused with his personality. . . . It is indeed not a work for the public at all, but for those who can enter into converse with a great mind in the things which meant most to him."

We may fairly assume, however, that there is a considerable proportion of the public no less able than players to "enter into converse with a great mind," even when the converse is so intimate as in this case. It is merely a question of the players doing their duty and bringing the parties together.

The "Little Organ Book" is unexpectedly difficult, and as a rule the technical obstacles

are not of the conventional type that the student has conquered in his instruction book. That is why the "beginning organist" should be put to work on the "Little Organ Book" as soon as possible, and kept at it in preference to spending time over material—including some of the weaker fugues of Bach—that he will never want to play later on. These little pieces he will play more and more as long as he plays anything.

As to the general level of excellence, I believe that all who know the collection thoroughly will agree that of the whole forty-five pieces only two are failures—"Puer Natus" (because its inner parts seem to stick and its intention is not clear) and "These are the holy Ten Commandments" (which is so appropriately dogmatic as to be hopelessly unmusical).

As a practical point, it may be added that owing to the shortness of most of the preludes they may well be played in groups of three or four. Effective and well-contrasted little suites may easily be arranged. It is hardly necessary to point out that the pauses merely indicate the end of the chorale phrases and have not their usual meaning.

As was said above, perhaps too much has been made of the programmatic side of the chorale preludes. It is right and helpful that we should know something of this side, but we shall miss the spirit of these pieces if we imagine them to be more than very slightly dependent upon their descriptive features. Moreover, as we have seen, commentators differ considerably as to Bach's intention in some cases.

There is a tendency to regard Bach as having been the first to employ pictorial methods in

dealing with chorale melodies. It will be agreed that many of the descriptive figures are merely the conventional formulæ by which the same emotional states have been expressed for a long time, and will no doubt be expressed for a good many years to come. It is less generally known that they were by way of being conventions before Bach was born. There is hardly one of the long series used by Bach that cannot be found similarly employed in the chorale preludes of his predecessors. Moreover, the idea of organ solos or accompaniments illustrating the text associated with the chorale dates from the primitive days of organ music. Pirro, quoting Mattheson's "Ehrenpforte" (1740), tells us of Christoph Raupach, organist at Stralsund, who in 1710 used to give recitals after the Sunday service, the programme consisting of improvisations on chorale melodies. Raupach aimed at illustrating the words to which the tune was sung, and in order to avoid a misfire he distributed among the audience a printed explanation of the items. Pirro gives the scheme of a three-movement sonata thus improvised.

The "Little Organ Book," then, was no innovation save in the fact of its being a carefully planned work, carrying out consistently methods that had so far been used in an isolated or haphazard way. No work of Bach contains so little original matter. In many cases two of the constituents—the chorale melody and the characteristic motive—were common property. To make matters worse, some of the chorales are dull, especially when treated as slow *canti fermi*. Bach was as yet only at the beginning of his prime as a

composer. He was destined to produce some of the colossal things in music. Yet all who have thoroughly grasped these little pieces will agree that he never showed his genius more convincingly than when time after time he thus took two—sometimes three—conventions and produced from them not another convention but a poem.

## V.—MORE WEIMAR PRELUDES AND FUGUES.

A group of Bach's finest preludes and fugues dates from the close of his stay at Weimar—Fantasia and Fugue in G minor (? Cöthen), Prelude and Fugue in G major, Toccata and Fugue in F, Prelude and Fugue in A minor, and Prelude and Fugue in C minor. Some of these movements were undoubtedly written at a much earlier period, but the works as a whole probably took on their final form shortly before Bach went to Cöthen in 1717—his thirty-third year.

It is more than usually difficult to settle the chronological order of the members of this group, because in several cases we know that the prelude and the fugue were written at different periods. Thus, the C minor Fugue is a good deal earlier in date than its Prelude, and an even greater length of time separates the A minor pair. Similarly, there can be little doubt that the Toccata in F was composed some years later than the fugue which it so effectually overshadows. On the whole, however, we shall not be far wrong if we regard the Prelude and Fugue in A minor as the first of the group, and the G minor Fantasia and Fugue as the last.

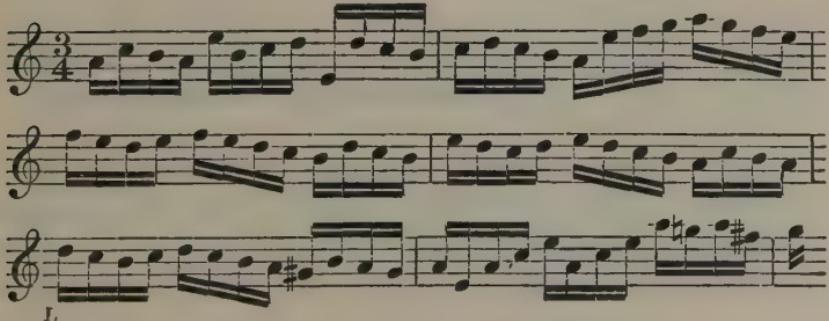
The early origin of the A minor Prelude (VII., 42) is clearly shown in its pronounced Buxtehedian features—the arpeggio opening, and the scales, shakes, pedal solo, and manual passage-writing in bars 22-36. But it is all far better than similar

Buxtehude movements in its mixture of freedom and organization, though the perfect essay in this field was not to come until some years later in the shape of the G minor Fantasia. Note, in passing, that a few bars before the end contain a hint at the last two variations of the Passacaglia. Schweitzer tells us that one of the manuscripts—that of J. P. Kellner—has the opening in this form :



Certainly the later and simpler version is much to be preferred.

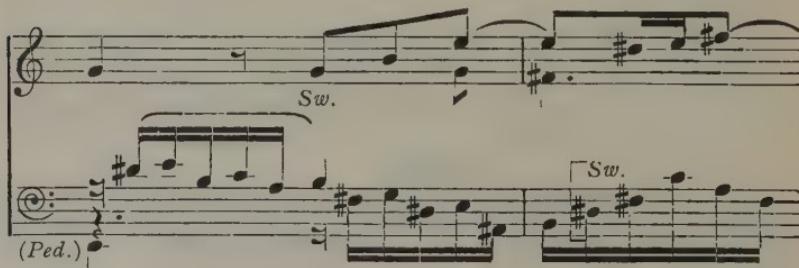
The subject of the fugue is comparatively early in style, especially in bars 3-5. We have seen Bach in his later Weimar days discarding long florid subjects in favour of simple and compact specimens. Evidently this fugue is an early work very much rewritten, or it is a middle period essay in a style suitable for concert purposes. Schweitzer, on the authority of Reinhard Oppel in the *Bachjahrbuch* of 1906, gives the following as the original form of the subject :



This rambling effort is used for a three-part clavier fugue, in which (we are told) "the plan of the [organ] fugue and its main incidents are already prefigured." At first sight the two subjects seem to have little in common, though after all they are hardly more divergent than some of the early attempts and finished products in Beethoven's sketch-books.

The A minor Fugue is deservedly one of the most popular of all Bach's organ works. It lacks the breadth and feeling of the great works of the composer's last years, but it shows a splendid combination of the brilliance and vitality of youth and the mastery and weight of maturity.

It demands a straightforward energetic method of performance. Only one manual change is called for, though others are frequently made—sometimes with detriment to the flow of the music. The long middle section is best played on the Swell, few English organs possessing a Choir of sufficient fire and body. As to the point at which we should leave the Great, opinions differ. Here is the plan suggested in the preface to the Schirmer edition :



But there is a good deal to be said for the scheme in the Augener edition, whereby the left hand remains on the Great until bar 57, going over to the Swell with the fourth semiquaver. For the return

to the Great we may choose between Mendelssohn's plan of dropping on to the long E in bar 94 and letting it ring out for a bar before transferring the left hand, or we may make the change at bar 90, the left hand going to the Great at the second half of the bar, the right joining it at the beginning of bar 91. We then work up to the final climax.

The cadenza is sometimes played on the full Swell. Widor and Schweitzer are emphatically in favour of remaining on the Great, which by this time is of course full. They say scornfully "There are even Apostles of Pettiness who do not hesitate in measure 146, the beginning of the cadenza, to start in on manual III., and thereafter find their way over into the *fortissimo* of manual I. during the further progress of the 32nd note figure." But a good deal depends upon the Swell at our disposal. Given one of great power and brilliance we cannot deny the effectiveness of its use here, nor the impressiveness of the return to the full Great for the final chords.

In the Prelude and Fugue in C minor (VII., 64) we have a notable pair of pieces, the Prelude being far and away the finer of the two. It shows Bach at his ripest, and may have been written at Leipsic during the revision of his organ works, in order to take the place of an earlier prelude. The form is well worth study. The material consists of two well-contrasted ideas: (a) an introduction of twenty-four bars, beginning broadly and increasing in animation, and (b) the fugal treatment of a simple subject which walks up from tonic to dominant and back again. This fugal section carries on the feeling of the opening, the triplet configuration being continued as an accompaniment

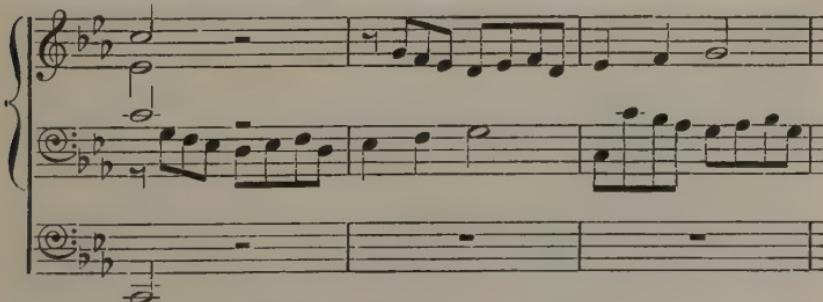
to the subject, and the key remaining the same. A full close in the dominant is reached at the end of page 65, and we appear to be entering on a repetition of the opening matter, but Bach gives us only four bars of it. He then goes ahead once more with the fugue, this time with the subject delivered in thirds, and with the triplet counter-theme below instead of above. During the next three pages the discussion of these two constituents is so welded that we are hardly conscious of passing from one to the other. The work is splendidly rounded off by a repetition of the first page. No movement of Bach shows a happier blend of variety and unity. The manual writing is frequently of a type rarely met with in organ music of the period, e.g.:

A musical score for piano, featuring three staves. The top staff uses a treble clef, the middle staff an alto clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. The key signature is one flat. The music consists of six measures. Measure 1: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs (F#-E, B-A, G-F#), Alto staff has quarter note D, Bass staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F). Measure 2: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs (B-A, E-D, A-G), Alto staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F), Bass staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F). Measure 3: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs (B-A, E-D, A-G), Alto staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F), Bass staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F). Measure 4: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs (B-A, E-D, A-G), Alto staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F), Bass staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F). Measure 5: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs (B-A, E-D, A-G), Alto staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F), Bass staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F). Measure 6: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs (B-A, E-D, A-G), Alto staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F), Bass staff has eighth-note pairs (D-C, G-F).

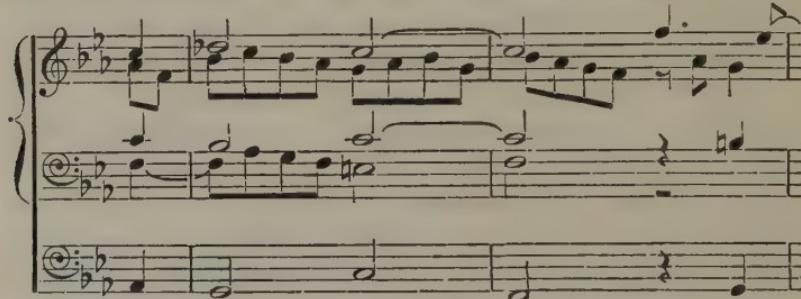
the harmony is rich and bold, and the whole is full of irresistible vigour and fling. The movement is well fitted for performance alone. It makes a brilliant recital item, and will appeal to hearers who have so far had no use for Bach.

One is surprised to find a marked difference of opinion as to the pace of this prelude. The speed in the edition before us— $\text{J}=84$ —is decidedly on the slow side. Griepenkerl is still more sedate—even funereal—with  $\text{J}=66$ ! The Augener suggestion is  $\text{J}=108$ —a good round speed, but not a bit too fast, surely. The last-named edition is rather lavish with indications of manual and other changes of power. After all, the piece is not long, so we may stick to the Great with no fear of monotony, reserving the reeds for the opening and closing pages, and for a brief climax here and there. Most authorities are agreed that the  $\text{C} \cdot \text{C}$  should be played  $\text{J}^3 \text{ C}$  when used in conjunction with quaver triplets.

Played immediately after the Prelude the Fugue perhaps seems stolid, whereas it is merely solid. It has a fine subject of the terse and weighty type, and the five-part treatment of the first section is massive without turgidity. The manual section beginning at bar 59 at first sight appears to be announcing a new subject:



but the little seven-note figure has already been anticipated. Something like it appears as a counter-subject in the tenor of bars 41 and 42, and again in the treble of bars 53 and 54, and the little theme itself will be found in the alto of bar 48:



It is present in almost every bar during this long episode, and save for a brief spell plays a prominent part throughout the rest of the movement. The only serious blemish on an otherwise splendid fugue is the episode preceding the final entries. The fact that it has no connection with what has gone before would matter little if it increased or at least maintained the interest. But it lets us down rather badly by dropping the counterpoint and giving us a tame figure over a kind of Alberti alto, and a bass that does little beyond marking time until the end of the episode, when it steps out to meet the pedal entry of the subject. Another irregularity, of which, however, the hearer is less conscious, is in the number of voices. Bach clearly intended to write a five-voiced fugue, but after the first section we meet with no more five-part writing until the closing bars. Despite its imperfections, however, the fugue contains much that is fine and attractive, and the majestic gravity of its opening, and the beautiful

flow of its counterpoint, will ensure it a place in the repertory, especially for use as a voluntary. It should be played at a good pace, *Alla breve*, the first section with plenty of diapason tone, the manual passage on fairly quiet Swell or Choir. We may make the weak episode tolerable by slightly quickening the pace and working up a good *crescendo* to full organ for the final twenty bars.

A very bold and effective work that is perhaps less widely known than it deserves to be is the Prelude and Fugue in G major (VIII., 112). The chief motive of the Prelude is:

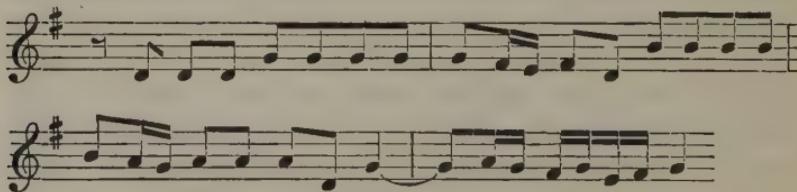


announced by the pedals after eleven bars of brilliant flourish, chiefly on the tonic chord. The figure appears only as a bass until rather more than half way through the movement, when the treble takes it over and delivers it four times as a rising sequence, after which we hear it no more, though we feel it is at the back of the rhythm and harmony from time to time until the end. Short as it is the Prelude is full of good points. Note, for example, how the repeated chords over the florid pedal are answered a little later by the animated manual parts over the drumlike pedal of repeated notes. Delightful, too, are the clashing seconds in the upper parts at the beginning of page 115:

The image shows three staves of musical notation in common time (indicated by a 'C') and G major (one sharp). The top staff is treble clef, the middle staff is bass clef, and the bottom staff is bass clef. The notation includes various note values (eighth, sixteenth, etc.) and rests. The top staff has a prominent bass line. The middle staff features a continuous pattern of eighth notes. The bottom staff has a bass line with some eighth-note patterns. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

and the numerous semiquaver passages in sixths and tenths. It is one of the most genial and breezy of Bach's organ works, and, like the C minor Prelude dealt with above, is excellent for propaganda purposes. Nobody hearing it played with the right spirit will again think of Bach as a merely dry composer.

The Fugue is only a little less animated. Its subject is a major and slightly extended version of that used in the opening chorus of the cantata, "My spirit was in heaviness." The cantata was written in 1714, whereas the organ work evidently dates from some years later. (Widor and Schweitzer are of opinion that it was composed at the same time as the cantata, but it is so far ahead of Bach's other fugues of the period that Prof. Sanford Terry's suggestion of 1724 is more likely to be right.) A glance will show that owing to the repeated notes, as well as to the fact that the second portion is a mere duplication of the opening a third higher, the subject :



is one that might well have led to a monotonous fugue. But the treatment is so full of resource, and the polyphony so vital, that the result is never in danger. A fine stroke in the final portion is the use made of a figure that first appeared in the pedals in bar 27. From bars 60-66 it reappears as a counter-subject, at first handed from part to part,

and then played as a rising bass under a stretto. Here are a couple of bars, showing the energizing effect of this figure:

An unusual feature is a dramatic pause on a discord in bar 71, after which some further excellent stretti bring the Fugue to a close.

A straightforward registration scheme seems to meet the case. The lengthy manual episode may be played on the Swell or Choir, but a moderately loud Great, with Swell uncoupled or very much reduced, is even better. The end of the episode

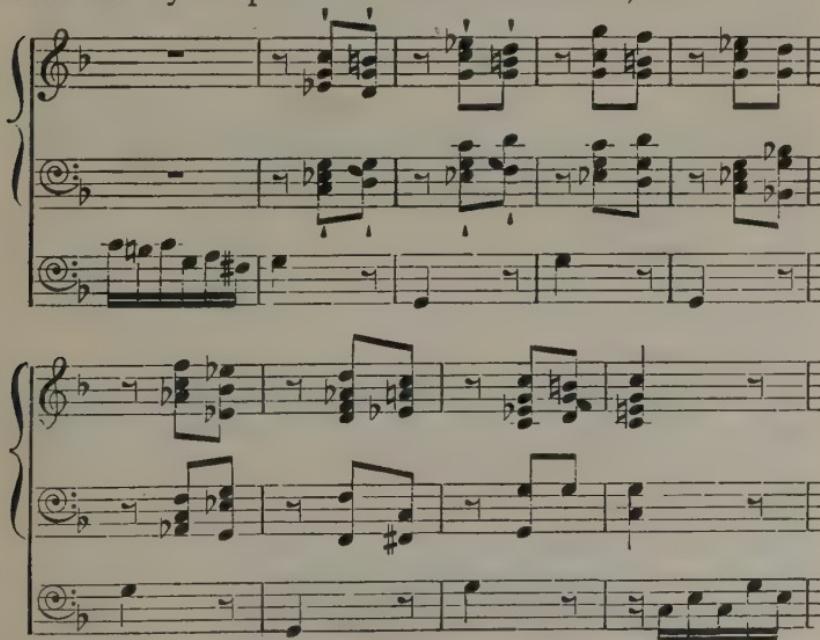
should be worked up in power and perhaps slightly in pace. The full organ should be reserved for the climax in bar 71, and should then be continued to the end. All who know the work well will agree with Widor and Schweitzer that "over this Prelude and Fugue something like a sunny sky seems to be spread. They are eloquent with a great serene confidence that banishes care from troubled hearts." The two movements were probably written at about the same time. Not only are they alike in mood, but (what is even more unusual in the organ preludes and fugues) they have a thematic connection. The kinship between the Fugue subject and the little theme of the Prelude is unmistakable (*see Exx.* on pages 151 and 152). Even more definite is the reference to the fugue subject in bars 61 and 62 of the Prelude:



The only other example of such anticipation is the G minor Prelude and Fugue in Vol. VIII., 120. Probably the preludes were improvised on occasions when Bach needed some such introduction to the fugues, in which case a slight reference to the subject was natural, though it may have been unconscious.

The Toccata in F (IX., 176) is one of the finest of the big preludial movements. Like the Dorian work it has neither the brilliance nor the rhapsodical quality we usually associate with the title. Instead there is immense and unflagging vigour, a spacious design, and a power of development that even Bach himself rarely if ever exceeded.

Continuous as the work is, one thinks of it as being in two parts. The canonic sections and the pedal solos fill 168 bars, the remaining 270 being concerned with development. We are apt to overlook the daring shown in the long introduction. It is a bold step to open a work with a long canon (55 bars) over a pedal point, followed by a pedal solo of 25 bars. Even bolder is the immediate repetition of both canon and solo. But there is no impression of things being at a standstill ; the effect is that of a preamble, and one so spacious that we know it must be followed by something even bigger. Bach's method of leading into the main body of the work is worth noting. The second pedal solo ended, we expect the full close with which the first solo was clinched. We get it too, but half a dozen bars later, the cadence being held off by a splendid series of chords, thus :

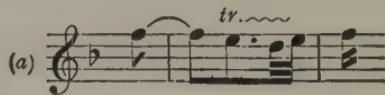


With the full close in C major the pedal leads off with what is sometimes described as a new subject. But its opening figure has already been anticipated by the arpeggio in bar 10 of the pedal solo :



The only new matter is the simple descending bass, but the ear is hardly conscious of this, owing to a close imitation of the arpeggio in the manual part :

This manual part has even less new material, for the last three chords are merely the cadence used at the end of the pedal solos. Even that was but a more concise and emphatic form of the treble in bar 4 :



As the arpeggio figure is clearly a derivative of :



used in the opening bar of the movement, we see that the greater part of this gigantic work of 438 bars is developed from an arpeggio of the common chord and a simple cadence, alternated with fugal treatment of the opening bars of the canon theme. In the whole range of music there are few if any more striking examples of steady and easily followed growth. It is a musical illustration of the parable of the grain of mustard seed. How the tiny shoot becomes the twig, and the twig the branch, is shown over and over again, as thus :

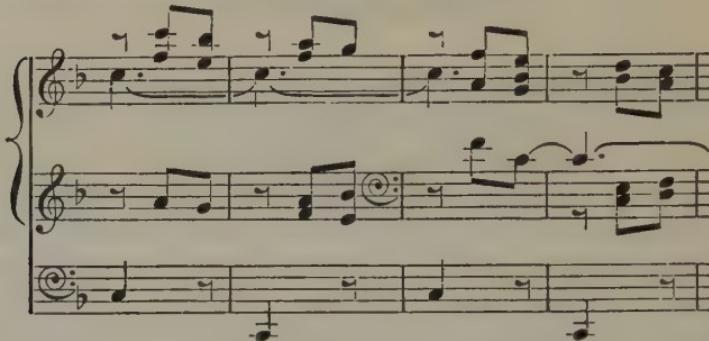
(a)

(b)

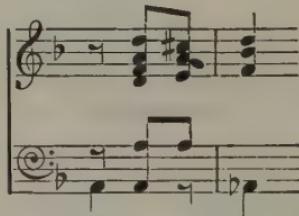
(c)

Another example : we have seen how the simple cadence at the close of the first pedal solo was developed into a striking series of chords. With

Bach it is never too late to grow, so in the last page we find these chords given a new aspect by being threaded on a long manual note :



And observe how, as a result of the interrupted cadence :



yet another limb is thrown out—a new member, but in its chords, arpeggio figure, and in the semi-quaver passages of the right hand and pedal later, showing its relation to the main stem. So close is this logical method throughout that we are hardly conscious of the fact that the movement contains a good deal of repetition. The repeated matter is usually in a fresh key, and there is almost always some slight change in the way it is approached, or in the disposition of its parts. One might easily give a course of lessons on development from this

movement. Let the student go carefully through it away from the keyboard. He will see (if he never saw before) that this is one of the considerable number of Bach's works of which it is difficult to speak without seeming to indulge in hyperbole.

A few words on the method of performance. Owing to the numerous rests in both manual and pedal parts, there is abundant opportunity for changes of registration. Nevertheless we shall do well to adopt a straightforward scheme. All the component parts of the work are of a vigorous type, and the use of delicate stops is unsuitable. As Widor and Schweitzer say: "The performance of the Toccata requires classic simplicity in both technical execution and registration. It tolerates no 'modernizing' whatsoever. In particular, all effects to be brought out by the alternation of the manuals should be eschewed. The style of Bach's writing, and the uninterrupted employment of the pedal, show clearly that he wished only the great manual to be used. Why act contrary to his intention?"

If we confine ourselves to the Great, we must avoid too continuous a use of heavy tone. We may well dispense with 16-ft. pedal stops for an occasional spell, if we have a good supply of strong and characteristic 8-ft. pedal tone available. But here, as usual, each player must decide on a scheme best suited to his organ and building. Here are three suggestions as to pace: Novello  $\text{♩} = 120$ ; Augener,  $\text{♩} = 132$ ; Peters  $\text{♩} = 76$ . The last is surely not much more than half the right pace.

There is general agreement on textual details, though Griepenkerl tells us that as the autograph

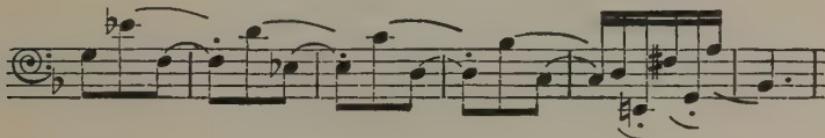
was lost, it was necessary to collate no less than seven manuscripts in order to arrive at the work as we know it. The chief differences were found in the pedal solos, which had evidently been cut down by various players whose pedal organs stopped at the top D. Very few organs at that time had the top F in the pedals. Among them was the Cöthen instrument, so we may assume that Bach either wrote the work there or amplified the pedal passages so as to include the unusual high notes.

A foot-note in the Augener edition says that "some players (Guilmant amongst others) hold that such passages as :



were produced by the limitations of Bach's footing technique, and should be played as straightforward scales." Mayrhofer, in his "Bach-Studien," takes the same view. "Why does the Master cut this caper (*Bockssprünge*)?" he asks; and replies, "Obviously because it is easier than the scale-passage." But what of the Prelude in D major, written some years earlier? That work opens with three scales much more difficult than this passage would have been. And we have seen Bach going on tour with the C major Toccata, which contains the most difficult of his pedal solos. It was probably his playing of this C major solo that drew from the Crown Prince Friedrich a ring set in precious stones. An eye-witness of the performance (at Cassel, in 1714) says: "His feet

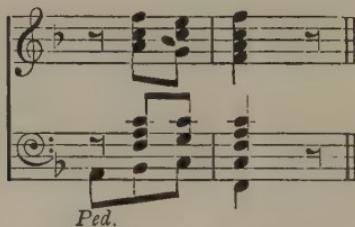
flew over the pedal-board as if they had wings." Are we to imagine that some years later Bach shied at such a simple matter as a rising scale of *c, d, e, f♯, g, a, b♭*? We must find another explanation, if an explanation be necessary. Probably Bach wrote the passage in its somewhat uncouth form because he felt that the rough vigour of the big zigzagging bass was in keeping, just as at the end of the short E minor Prelude he makes the pedals stride in tenths instead of thirds. Another likely explanation is that he carried on the idea of descending sevenths from the preceding passage. We know his weakness for this progression. If we take the whole passage, and phrase it as a succession of sevenths, it is not only logical, but much less clumsy:



The low E is sometimes flattened, but both here and in the corresponding passage in D minor (page 183, bar 2), the melodic form of the rising minor scale seems more natural.

Speaking of this Toccata, Pirro says: "Though remarkably brilliant, it is marked by a certain dryness, at least, in its opening; it is rather too much of a bravura type—perhaps the last Bach wrote."\* This is surely not the general opinion. "Remarkable brilliance" is not the prime characteristic of the work, nor is the canonic portion dry. The pedal solos are not showily difficult, and have

none of the futility common to their class, because they take up and carry on the argument started by the manuals. The right adjective for the work is Parry's—"colossal." And Mendelssohn hit the nail, when, writing from Sargans in 1831, describing a recital he had given there, he said that "the Toccata in F, with the modulation at the end, sounded as if it would bring the church down," adding: "He was a tremendous Cantor." Tremendous, indeed! It would be interesting to know what Bach's contemporaries thought of some of the more daring passages in the Toccata. Probably not many swallowed them without some straining, and we may be sure that a few heads were shaken over the grinding final cadence:

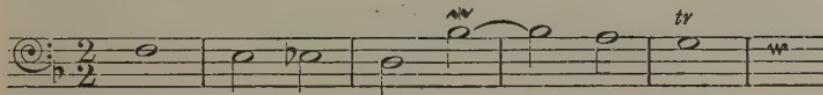


After these gigantic doings, the Fugue, with its steady, brief, and plain subject, seems, as Parry says, "almost superfluous." It is undervalued because most of us compare it with the Toccata, whereas it is so widely different in style and mood that we may imagine Bach deliberately doing his best to make comparison impossible. But the fact is that after so lengthy and exuberant a work as the Toccata there is a call for nothing else save a few minutes' rest for both player and hearer. We must use the Fugue as a separate work, and judge it on its merits. These are so considerable

that had it not been so completely overshadowed by the Toccata it would have been among the most justly esteemed of the fugues just below the handful of masterpieces.

When, some years before, Bach essayed to write a double fugue (on a theme of Legrenzi) he failed badly. The result was too long, and it sounded even longer than it was because he adopted the mechanical plan of giving out the second subject *solus*, afterwards making a further hold-up by resting two parts while the pair of subjects were shown in combination.

In the F major Fugue the method is far less leisurely. The subjects are short, the second is brought on accompanied, and the combination is managed in such a way that instead of making things hang fire it increases the interest and animation. There are three fairly-defined sections, of course, but they run into one another so naturally that there is no effect of scrappiness. And the contrast is admirable—first the thoughtful four-part treatment of :



leading straight into three-part working, for manuals only, of the well-contrasted second subject :

A musical score in F major, 2/2 time. It consists of two staves, each with a different vocal line. The top staff begins with a quarter note followed by a dotted half note. The bottom staff begins with a quarter note followed by a dotted half note. The music is written in a clear, legible hand.

The third section (wisely the shortest) maintains the quaver movement set up by the second subject and gives us some delightful three- and four-part writing, with the two themes worked together. A curious point is that the first subject makes one entry as an inner part before being combined with the second. Works in this form are so scarce that few rules exist, but obviously it is desirable that the first subject should not be heard in the final section—especially at its return—save in combination with the second. Perhaps this little irregularity puts the fugue out of court so far as Prout was concerned. In his “Fugue,” speaking of examples on more than one subject, he ignores the F major, but analyses the C minor, describing it as “masterly,” and “one of the most perfect examples, as regards its form.” This may be so, but on purely musical grounds the F major is immeasurably superior. The gravity of its opening, and the sober cheerfulness of the remainder, make it an admirable voluntary. Though probably earlier in date than the Toccata, its harmony and the freedom of its counterpoint show the almost—if not quite—mature Bach.

By the bye, the harsh, simultaneous use of B flat and B natural in the eighth bar from the end is easily explainable, the B flat being an auxiliary note. Widor and Schweitzer suggest D instead of B flat in the tenor, but most of us will prefer the passage as Bach evidently wrote it.

The G minor Fantasia and Fugue (VIII., 127) is perhaps the latest of the Weimar works. There is general agreement as to its having been written for performance at Hamburg when Bach went there in 1720. This explains the reversion in the Fantasia

to a style of writing which he had more or less discarded for some years. We have seen that the other preludes written at this time usually consist of close development of one or two ideas. In the Fantasia he takes up again the free rhapsodical methods of the Northern composers. As Spitta says, "Bach seems to have wished to meet the Hamburg organists on their own peculiar ground." The result is the finest of all his essays in the quasi-improvisation form. If some of its transports now strike us as being a little on the conventional side, it is because they are expressed in terms that Bach's imitators have worn threadbare. You have only to give most German organ composers a sheet of music-paper with "Fantasia" written at the top, and they will with fatal readiness fill it with demisemiquaver recitative passages punctuated with big chords. The device is one well suited to the organ, but it has the defect of not wearing well, and it too often leads to incoherence.

The G minor Fantasia leaves other works of the type far behind, because its passage-writing is expressive and full of harmonic suggestion, and even more because of the skill with which these passages are balanced and contrasted by fine polyphony, chains of suspensions, and daring modulations, the whole being held together by a fine pedal part.

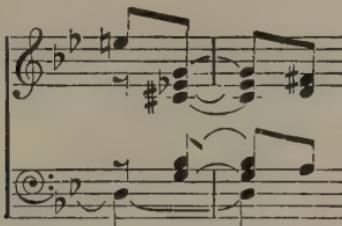
In Bach's earlier essays in this field we frequently find the contrasting passages almost if not quite as loose in texture as the recitative to which they act as foil. Compare such easy-going methods with that employed here. Note how, the opening flourish over, Bach applies a corrective in the shape of a brief section in which the three manual parts discuss very closely a figure based on the

diminished fifth, while the pedal in a more deliberate way deals with a similar motive:

The musical score consists of two staves of organ music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is written in common time. The first section begins with a series of eighth-note chords in the treble clef staff, followed by a bass line in the bass clef staff. The second section begins with a bass line in the bass clef staff, followed by a treble clef staff with eighth-note chords. The score is divided into two sections by a brace.

Violent as is the contrast between these two sections, the second seems to grow out of the first quite naturally, and its persistent dissonance maintains the emotional note struck by the opening. It reappears after another free passage, this time with changes both in the key and in the order of entry of the voices. It leads into some new material, with a bass that makes us long for a pedal-board of four octaves, so that we might carry the splendid scale down in one sweep instead of coming up for three fresh starts.

The demisemiquaver passages in this work seem to call for a more measured style of playing than similar flights of Bach's earlier period. They are far more definite in rhythm and harmonic feeling, and in some cases a kind of check is placed on them by accompanying parts. The phrasing implied in Bach's grouping, *plus* some of the elasticity of a cadenza, will be more satisfactory than eccentric rushings and haltings. Some editions suggest quiet Swell stops for these passages, but the character of the movement as a whole seems to call for a good deal of tone, if it can be employed with clearness. By the bye, the unusual progression :



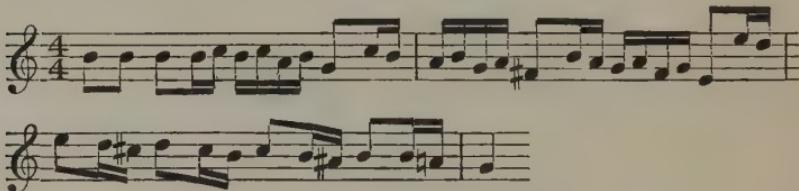
is watered down in the Augener edition by a  $\natural$  before the alto E. Bach was always rather daring in his use of the augmented sixth, so we have no grounds for doubt about the flat.

This work and the Chromatic Fantasia may be regarded as companions. Perhaps the organ piece is the superior, partly because it contains more contrast, and also because it is shorter and less diffuse.

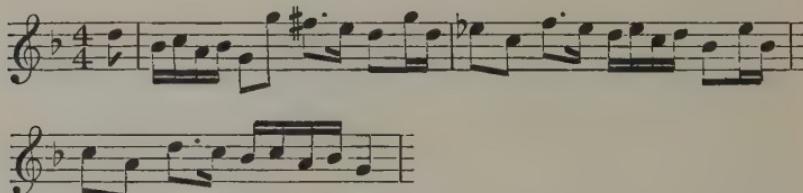
Griepenkerl tells us that in no manuscripts were the Fantasia and Fugue found together. However, on the back of an old copy of the Fantasia the

theme of the Fugue was written, with an indication that it should follow the Fantasia. On this authority Griepenkerl printed them together for the first time. In one MS. of the Fugue the work is in F minor, but this was evidently a transposition, judging from the alterations in the pedal part, where the CC of the original becomes B<sup>b</sup> and the copyist had to dodge up an octave.

A good deal of interest is attached to the subject. There seems to be no doubt that Bach played the work to Reinken during the Hamburg visit, and that he went prepared to please the old man, for the theme is obviously based on the opening of Reinken's fifth Sonata in his "Hortus Musicus":



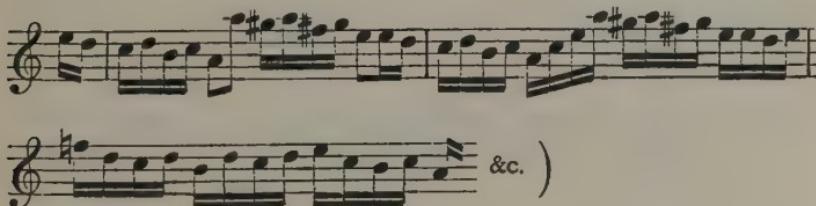
Mattheson tells us in his "Generalbassschule" that at an organ examination in 1725 he gave the candidates the following subject for the extempore fugue test:



He does not mention the source, but says that he knows well who was the first to work it out

artistically. He adds that he chose so familiar a subject in order that the candidates might come well through the ordeal—an accommodating method of conducting examinations that many students would like to see revived. But if Mattheson was so familiar with the theme, why did he give it in such a miserably pruned form? Schweitzer says that Herr Keller, of Stuttgart, explains the discrepancy thus: Mattheson could not give the subject to the candidate in its original form, "because according to the rules of fugue it was incorrect. It is laid down in the rules that a fugue theme shall not extend over an octave. The Hamburg examiner therefore thought it necessary to alter Bach's theme in order to bring it into conformity with the eternal laws of the art." In this case the law has proved to be a good deal less eternal than Mattheson thought it to be.

(By the way, the subject of a fugue by Johann Immanuel Muller, published in the "Organ School" of Zöllner, Geissler, and Körner, opens in this amazingly and amusingly reminiscent vein :



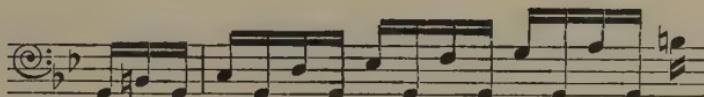
The popularity of the "great G minor," (even in the most unlikely quarters) is easily understood. In melody and rhythm the subject is one of the most attractive ever devised, and its treatment is marked

by a clarity and finish that defy criticism. It is not the greatest of Bach's fugues—at least three others show no less technical mastery combined with greater depth and power—but it is an unique example of his ability to carry through a long and elaborate scheme without a hint of failure either in deftness or spontaneity. The latter quality is the more notable because Bach handicaps himself by a regular counter-subject—indeed, we may say there are two, for the treble of bars 10-12 so frequently accompanies the subject and counter-subject that it is hardly less important. The three are used in triple counterpoint, five of the six possible combinations being used. The fugue is rich in episodes, the most notable being that which introduces the little figure alluded to on page 53, probably a derivative of the :



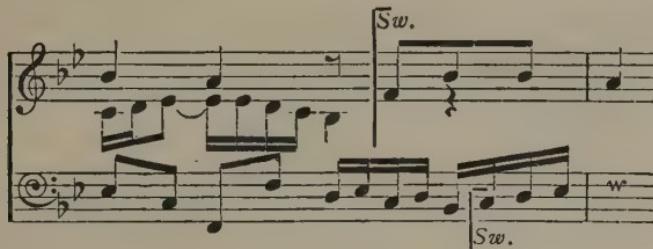
with which the third episode opens. There is no need to dwell on the numerous enjoyable features of so familiar a work, but mention may be made of the long series of chords of the sixth with which bar 61 opens:

—there are nearly forty of them, and they provide a very jolly way of going down the keyboards—and the manner in which the rather old-fashioned Alberti passage :



is made tremendously alive by being immediately caught up and repeated by the treble and alto.

The registration presents few problems. We shall naturally go over to a second manual for the middle section, the most convenient point being :



The next entry of the subject may easily be soloed on the Choir or Great, *mf*, the right hand coming back to the Swell at the second semiquaver of the fourth beat in bar 46. We may drop on to the Great for the last note in bar 50, and solo the subject, the right hand following at the last note of bar 53. The two-part passage from the end of bar 93 to the middle of bar 103 goes well on the full Choir. The left hand should of course complete the descending scale in bar 94 before being transferred. The effect of this is so good that we need not mind if the Choir entry is temporarily killed.

The full Swell passage may begin with the left hand at the last note in bar 100, the right hand going over with the seventh note in bar 103. Both go on to the full Great immediately after the pedal entry in bar 110. These changes are legitimate, because they can all be carried out without breaking the flow. The general scheme should be on the loud side. Widor and Schweitzer say: "Inconceivable it is that there have been 'virtuosi' who so far misunderstood the proud, vigorous character of this theme as to let it enter, at the outset, in *piano* on the second manual."

• • • • •

This brings us to the end of Bach's second period—or, as some prefer to call it, his first master-period.

## VI.—THE SONATAS FOR TWO MANUALS AND PEDALS

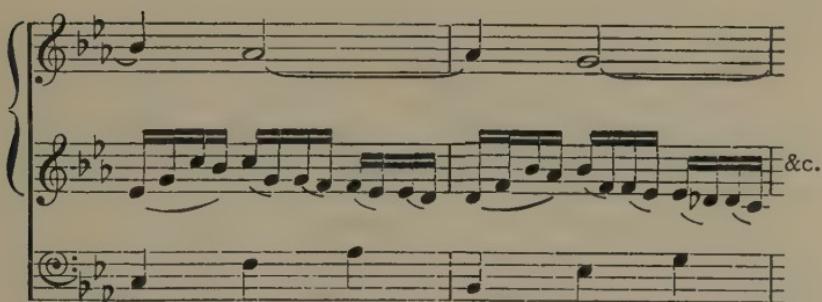
We have seen Bach producing his "Little Organ Book" for the instruction of "the beginning organist." It was fitting that he should supplement that delightful work with a no less admirable collection of pieces calculated to produce the finished player. Bach joins hands with the moderns in a good many ways, but never more pleasantly and humanly than when, as in these cases, in the Anna Magdalena Clavier Book, and elsewhere, he showed how the student's technical and musical development should be simultaneous. As Parry says, "he delighted in combining the beautiful with the educationally helpful." It was left for some of his successors to produce dreary wastes of keyboard studies entirely devoid of musical significance—mere technical hard nuts with no kernel of beauty to make the cracking worth while.

Purists point out that these works ought not to be described as organ sonatas, inasmuch as they were written for a two-manual clavicembalo with pedals. But we may reasonably assume that Bach played them on the organ, and we know that they were written as studies in organ technique. Moreover, the title-page leaves the matter open: "the works commonly known as the six Sonatas for the organ . . . . are nowhere authoritatively described as for that instrument, but on a title-page (which may be of Bach's time, or soon after) as 'Six Sonatas for Two Keyboards and Pedal,' by which is *most probably* intended a harpsichord

with two rows of keys and pedals." (Parry, but my italics.) The two-manual and pedal clavicembalo was (as Grieppenkerl tells us) "an instrument at that time in the possession of every student on the organ, to exercise hands and feet at home and to prepare facility in a free use of them on the organ; for in the opinion of that time everything on the organ itself should be free invention." (We need not consider the latter point seriously. The organ student practised at home mainly to save time and organ-blowers' wages.)

That Bach associated the pedal clavicembalo with organ music is proved by his having included a number of chorale preludes in the "Clavierübung." It is worth noting, too, that Forkel deals with the Sonatas in the section headed "Compositions for the Organ," adding that Bach wrote "other organ Sonatas," alluding, probably, to the Pastorale, trios, and similar detached movements. This is significant, because Forkel lived sufficiently near the Bach era to have imbibed a good many of the ideas of Bach's contemporaries regarding his works. And although the idiom of the Sonatas is not always that of the organ, it is in many places certainly not that of the clavicembalo. Such passages as:

*Largo.*



would be ineffective on the clavicembalo because of the call for sustained tone. This is only one of the numerous cases where Bach was thinking in terms of the organ, or of some such chamber combination as flute and violin, rather than of an instrument so lacking in *sostenuto* as the clavicembalo. (As a particularly striking example, see the fugue which forms the *Finale* of the C minor Sonata. The counter-subject in the treble in bars 10-14 is a typical piece of organ writing—indeed, it is a fellow to that in the great G minor Fugue.) The point as to whether the works were written for organ is not important, and it is touched on here only because Bach's biographers seem to have decided rather too readily in favour of the clavicembalo. But after all, whatever the works may have been originally, we may boldly call them organ sonatas now for two excellent reasons: (1) they have become a very important part of the organ repertory, and (2) there is no other instrument in general use on which they can be played.

The composition of the various movements extended over a considerable period, and, as is so frequently the case with Bach's works, some of the material was originally designed for other purposes. Thus, the *Finale* of the E minor Sonata originally

came between the Prelude and Fugue in G major (the Fugue on the subject from the Cantata "My spirit was in heaviness"), and the *Adagio* and *Vivace* which open the same Sonata were extracted from the Cantata "Die Himmel erzählen." The *Largo* in A minor was intended to serve as a middle movement to the Prelude and Fugue in C major, probably that with the Fugue subject beginning *c-d-e-f*. (Schweitzer alone says the *Largo* belonged to a Prelude and Fugue in G minor, an unlikely theory, on the score of key, though of course Bach may have transposed it from G minor when using it for the Sonata.) The oldest of the movements appears to be that which opens the D minor Sonata; it is found among the variants of the first part of the "Well-Tempered Clavier."

There can be no question as to the effectiveness of the organ as a medium for works of this kind. We may be sure that if Bach wrote them for the clavichembalo he was not long in perceiving that whereas that instrument merely gave him two manuals and pedals all of the same tone-colour (the only difference between the manuals being that of power and, by means of an octave-coupler, of pitch), the organ enabled him to use a different colour for each of the three voices, and to make them all of equal strength when desired. The last point is important, because although there are some passages where the effect should clearly be that of melody and accompaniment, the texture is mainly polyphonic, and its beauty can be properly realised only when the three strands vary in colour but not in strength.

In style they are a curious blend of the Italian and the German. Bach wrote them when passing

through a kind of chamber music phase. He was apt to follow up in this way any branch of composition that attracted him specially. Parry suggests that they were written "as a kind of sequel to the Sonatas for violin and clavier, or flute and clavier. Bach had here written a good deal in three-part polyphony, one voice being given to the violinist and a couple to the keyboard-player. He may have been struck by the desirability of a similar type of writing for a medium in which all three parts could be managed by one performer." The only point against this theory of Parry's is that, as we have seen, two of the movements had already been written definitely for use as organ works. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that in the Sonatas Bach was developing an organ form in which he had previously experimented. Later he continued to develop it by combining it with the chorale prelude, some of the finest pieces in the Catechism Preludes and the Eighteen Preludes being cast in organ trio shape.

Spitta thinks that in these Sonatas Bach found the three-movement organ form that he had endeavoured to establish in the Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C, and in one or two other organ works. This may be so, for although at first sight a slow movement between a prelude and a fugue may seem to be well placed, in actual practice it works out otherwise unless all the movements are on the short side. There is a vital difference between a three-movement sonata and a prelude and fugue separated by a slow movement. In a sonata the most serious business is almost invariably in the opening and slow movements, the *finale* making the least demands on the hearer. In the case of a

prelude and fugue the complexities are in the latter, and the longer and more elaborately developed the prelude the less chance there is of the fugue making its full effect. (In our last chapter we saw in the Toccata and Fugue in F a good example of a fugue being killed by its prelude.) But probably the real origin of the Sonatas is to be found in Bach's habit of working out the possibilities of any form to which by necessity or chance his attention had been directed. The bulk of the movements were undoubtedly written round about 1723-27, a period when, judging from the chronological list of his works, the chamber music fit was on him. It was a natural and happy idea to write a type of chamber music possessing the double claim of being well adapted for both clavicembalo and organ. And here was young Friedemann growing up, already a notable performer, and hoping soon to leave home for his first post: the Sonatas would be just the thing to add the finishing touches to his playing. This is not mere guesswork. Forkel says: "Bach wrote them [the Sonatas] for his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, whom they helped to become the great performer he was when I knew him." Friedemann, thus technically armed, was appointed organist at the Sophienkirche, Dresden, in 1733.

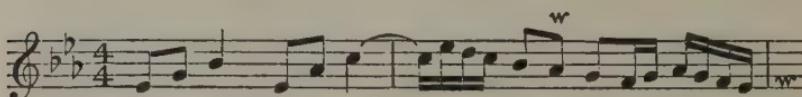
Bach's readiness to be influenced by a mere word has already been mentioned in discussing the "Little Organ Book." We have another example here. Parry says: "It may seem a little perplexing that he not only took over the grouping of movements and the name, but also the Italian style. This may have been owing to his extreme susceptibility even to words, so that the Italian name set

his mind going in an Italian style. But it may also have been the much more subtle reason that, the type of sonata having been mainly cultivated by Italians—and that with distinguished success—the associations of the particular scheme were all mainly Italian." The Italian influence is obvious. What seems so far to have been overlooked is the probability of early French organ writers having contributed something. These men were much given to the writing of organ trios, and Bach, we know, possessed a good deal of their music in manuscript.

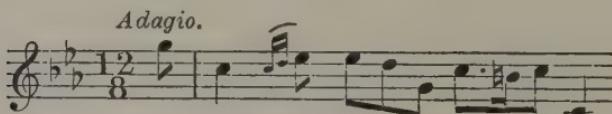
If the Sonatas are less appreciated than they should be, the fact is probably due to editors, commentators, and teachers having laid undue stress on their value as technical material. No doubt many a student has taken them up as studies and has soon come under their spell as pure music. But probably the majority stick at the exercise stage, and, after working at a few movements as studies in independence of hands and feet, lay the volume aside with Rinck's "School" and Schneider's Trios. Oddly enough, some of the movements have achieved a wide popularity in unexpected quarters owing to the efforts not of an organist but of an orchestral conductor. Sir Henry Wood's arrangements of the *Andante* from No. 4 and the *Vivace* from No. 6 have long been much enjoyed by Queen's Hall audiences. One would have thought that the hint should have been enough for our organ players, and especially our recitalists. The movements arranged by Sir Henry are equalled, even surpassed, in attractive qualities by several of their companions. Let the recitalist who wishes

to deal a blow at the still-lingering tradition that Bach was a mere composer of dry fugues play again and again the first and third movements of No. 1, the slow movement of No. 3, the first movement of No. 2, the *Andante* and *Finale* of No. 4, and the first and third movements of No. 6. There are other movements as good—for example, the *Finale* of No. 2, which is one of the finest of three-voice fugues—but those mentioned above are most likely to appeal at once to the average hearer.

The charm of the Sonatas lies chiefly in their melodiousness, the close and animated interplay of their voices (especially in the manual parts), and the beautiful ease and flow of the polyphony. Let us look at a few examples of themes that take hold of one immediately. Here is the frank subject which opens No. 1 :

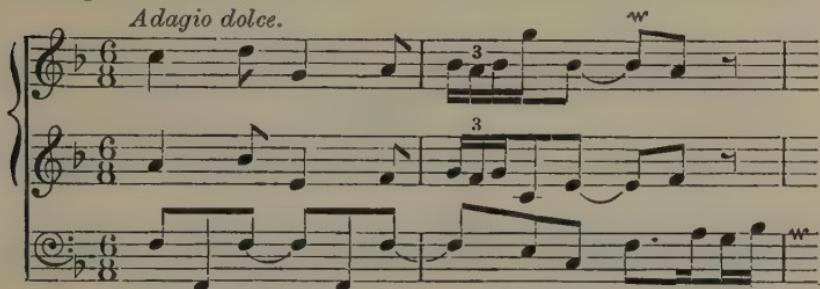


The *Adagio* that follows is in Siciliano style, beginning with this expressive tune :



So far as the slow movements are concerned, however, the palm for melody must go to the

*Adagio* of No. 3, the theme of which has a kind of lazy grace all its own:

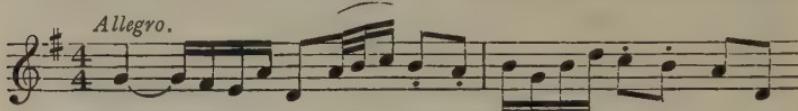


Bach was evidently fond of it, for he arranged it later as a Trio for flute, violin, and clavier, in which form it serves as a slow movement to a Concerto in A minor. In the version before us nothing is more delightful than the way the tune steals in with one of its voices slightly decorated, first in D minor, later in F, with the parts inverted. Here is the D minor passage:

Very characteristic is the robust subject of the *Vivace* of No. 6:



and hardly less arresting the opening of the *Finale*:



One of the most enjoyable of all the eighteen movements is the *Finale* of No. 2. It does not lend itself to quotation, because the effect lies chiefly in the sparkling animation with which it is carried through. It is one of the very best of all Bach's recital works. A movement which runs it close in this quality of spirited tunefulness is the *Vivace* of No. 4.

One would like to comment on the delightful development in some of the movements, but space does not permit. The student should examine the *Allegro moderato* of No. 1, and see what Bach makes of the opening figure. He should then look at the *Siciliano* which follows, and note Bach's use of the opening theme, inverted and given to the pedals. And, as a crowning example of making something out of nothing, the *Andante* of No. 4 must be examined. This is one of the movements so popular with Queen's Hall audiences. Yet it consists of nothing more than a couple of motives of the simplest description, embellished, inverted, imitated, and made the most of generally. Here is a quotation showing the second of these two themes, a figure half a bar in

length, elaborated and used dialogue fashion, the whole passage then being inverted:

The image displays three staves of musical notation. The top staff begins with a rest followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The middle staff starts with a sixteenth-note pattern. The bottom staff starts with a eighth-note pattern. A brace groups the first two staves. A bracket underlines the eighth-note pattern in the third staff. The notation consists of three staves, each with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a common time signature. The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

It should be observed that this theme is really an extension of the figure :



which is a prominent feature in the counter-theme of the first subject, so that the basis of the whole movement is in the first three bars.

As was said above, the organ is a better medium for the sonatas than any instrument of the cembalo type could have been. This superiority is shown unmistakably in some of the rapid conversational passages. Sometimes these consist of short phrases treated in canon :

(a) *Allegro.*

(Sonata No. II.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

&c.

(b) *Vivace.*

(Sonata No. III.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

A musical score for three voices: Treble, Alto, and Bass. The Treble and Alto parts are on top, both in G major (indicated by a G and a sharp sign). The Bass part is on the bottom, in C major (indicated by a C and a bass clef). The music consists of two measures. In the first measure, the Treble has a note followed by sixteenth-note pairs, and the Alto has sixteenth-note pairs. In the second measure, the Alto has sixteenth-note pairs, and the Bass has eighth notes. The score ends with an ellipsis and the instruction "&c.". The vocal parts are enclosed in large brace-like brackets.

The chief point of such passages lies in the eager effect of the close capping—an effect that depends largely on the voices being of equal strength and of different quality. At times we find all three voices joining in this animated discussion :

*Un poco allegro.*

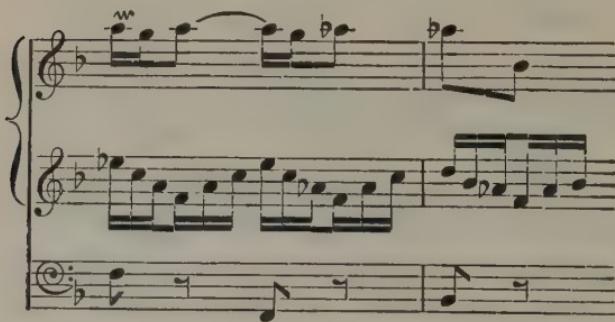
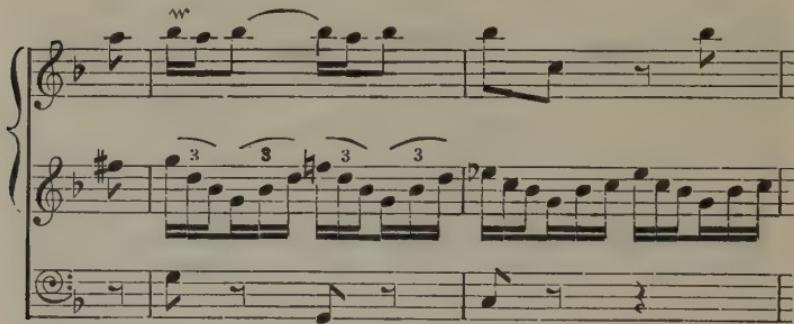
(Sonata No. IV.)

The musical score consists of six staves of music for piano, arranged in two systems. The first system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature (indicated by a '3'). The second system begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth-note and sixteenth-note figures, and dynamic markings like '3' and '6'. The score concludes with a repeat sign and the instruction '&c.' at the end of the second system.

Only an organ or a chamber music combination can do such passages justice. There are no more

delightful moments in Bach's organ music than these—and they are frequent in the Sonatas.

A few words must be said on the registration. A good working principle may be based on the fact that in form, idiom, as well as in a certain intimate quality, the Sonatas are chamber music. Violent changes of stops are clearly out of place; for, as Schweitzer points out, it is inconceivable that new instruments should be added in the course of a Trio. Nevertheless, we must be prepared to make slight modifications in the relative strength of the keyboards from time to time, especially in passages where the melodic interest shifts from keyboard to keyboard. For example, in the first movement of No. III., the combination that suits



will be absurdly top-heavy for the inversion of the passage that occurs later. The triplets should be a mere delicate ripple, especially when they occur in the higher position. Most cases of this kind can be met with ease on organs with an enclosed Choir—at all events, so far as the softer movements are concerned. In the louder ones we shall be reminded once more of the deficiency of the average English Choir organ in the matter of *mf* diapason tone. It may be necessary to add or throw off a stop at times. If so, we should make the change as unobtrusively as possible, our object as a rule being to re-adjust the balance of the two manuals rather than to obtain variety. It must be a perverted ear that demands more variety and interest than are provided by these three beautifully woven strands of tone. The stops should be clear and prompt of speech, rather than loud. In the pedal department there is no room for the booming Bourdon that used to be the sole pedal stop on so many small and medium-sized English organs. The prevailing pedal tone should often be 8-ft. rather than 16-ft., and on occasion we may well use a soft 4-ft. as well as a telling 8-ft. and a soft 16-ft. A *very* soft 16-ft. may be used for one of the manual voices at times, especially in the more expressive slow movements, and, just as string players would play some of these passages *vibrato*, we need not be afraid to use the tremolo, always provided that we have a good one—a wave, not a rattle.

Many of the ornaments may be omitted at pleasure, for reasons already given. Schweitzer points out that Friedemann's manuscript (on which the Peters edition is founded) contains many more

embellishments than Bach's own autograph copy, which Emanuel possessed. Emanuel's copy is the later in date, so we see that as Bach grew older he used fewer ornaments—indeed, his opponent Scheibe attacked him on this very score. The organ student, then, may as a rule spend his time to greater advantage than in negotiating the more difficult of the ornaments, both here and in the organ works generally.

On the technical advantages to be derived from a study of the Sonatas there is little need to speak. Here is Schweitzer's opinion: "To this very day they are the *Gradus ad Parnassum* for every organist. Whoever has studied them thoroughly will find scarcely a single difficulty in the old or even in modern organ music that he has not met with there and learned how to overcome; and before all he will have attained that absolute precision that is the chief essential for good organ playing, since in this complicated trio-playing the slightest unevenness in touch is heard with appalling clearness." And Parry: ". . . these Sonatas gain quite a special character from the manner in which Bach makes use of the device of crossing the hands and interlacing the parts which are given to them. It seems, indeed, to be his cue in these works, and the effect is to make the works extraordinarily serviceable to develop independence of hands and feet."

So far as the latter members are concerned the Sonatas are of great value because they provide pedal passages well off the beaten track—wide leaps, arpeggios, and melodic and other passages wherein good phrasing is called for. Some of the movements contain Bach's own phrasing

marks. As Schweitzer and Widor point out, "they show that Bach's ideal aim was to wrest from the keyboard a plasticity such as is peculiar to bowed instruments." As studies in phrasing alone these works cannot be neglected by the student.

But let the last word on them be a reference to their value as pure music. Parry says: "The Sonatas present a polyphonic texture of the very first quality, and there are few works of Bach that are more delicately poised or more subtly finished." Schweitzer is equally enthusiastic: "For the connoisseur there is hardly a purer æsthetic delight than to pursue these three contrapuntal lines—so free and yet so bound by the laws of beauty—through their delightful intertwinings, to say nothing of the perfection of the themes." And let due honour go to Forkel, who, though living at a time when Bach's fame was under a cloud, had the seeing eye that could detect a masterpiece, neglected though it might be. He says of the Sonatas: "It is impossible to overpraise their beauty. Bach composed them in the full vigour of his powers, and they may be considered his *chef d'œuvre* in this form." These things being so, why do no more than a mere handful of organists give the public a chance of hearing this delightful music? Any doubts as to its attractive power have long since been dispelled by the popular success of Sir Henry Wood's arrangements of some of the movements. They are difficult, it is true, but our recitalists do not eschew music on that score. Unfortunately they do not sound difficult—in fact, the better their performance the easier they appear to the listener. A fatal

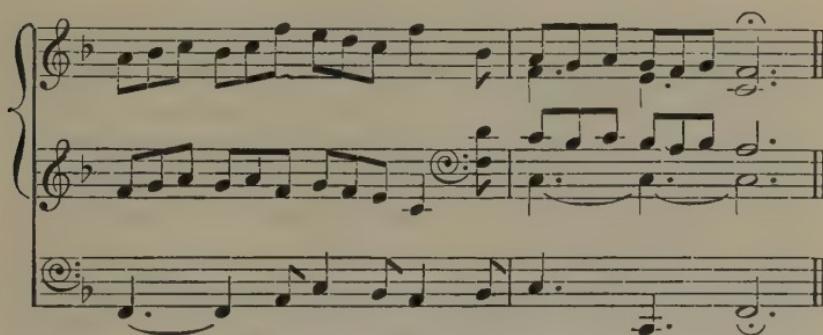
defect this, where most soloists are concerned. Now, a work that is easy, and yet sounds desperately difficult . . . .

## §

A few detached pieces apparently written for the clavicembalo may well be included in this chapter. They are not very important, but they are too good to be neglected. The Trio in D minor (II., 54) is overloaded with ornaments, and there are some dry moments, but there is much charm as well. Note the courageous and effective consecutive fourths and fifths between the manual parts, and linger—as you will surely want to—over the cadence, with its beautiful use of a third inversion of the augmented sixth.

The Fantasia with Imitation (XII., 71) is obviously an early work. The second portion, headed "Imitatio," is a pleasant treatment of a short simple theme. The set of pieces in Vol. XII., beginning with the Pastorale in F, is usually regarded as a Suite, but there is no sign of their having been originally connected. The suite of Bach's day did not contain movements in different keys. Moreover, only the Pastorale is provided with a part for the pedals. All the music of these little pieces is pleasant, but the palm goes to the Pastorale. Parts of this delightful movement may be soloed, but the lay-out generally seems to call for the use of one manual only. Its character indicates a fairly late date. How came Bach to leave such a successful work unfinished?—for we cannot regard the A minor cadence as an end. The effect is so unsatisfactory that it must have put the work out of court with many

organists. For the benefit of those who wish for an ending in the tonic, I venture on the following suggestion: After the A minor close, go back to the beginning and repeat bars 1-9; then make a little bridge-passage, and end with the A minor close transposed to F, thus:



This employs hardly a note not in the original, and satisfactorily rounds off a very attractive little work.

The Trio in C minor which follows this set of pieces is in two movements, an *Adagio* containing passages suggestive of an echo effect, and a spirited *Allegro*, with an occasional flavour of Handel. The work seems to be an early attempt at a Trio-Sonata, and is probably one of the efforts Forkel had in mind when speaking of "other organ sonatas."

If the above discussion of this side of Bach's work appears to be unduly lengthy, it may be urged in excuse that some kind of propaganda seems to be needed. In the sonatas and similar works organists have a batch of movements far superior on all grounds to many of the fugues that are played to threadbareness.

## VII.—MISCELLANEOUS CHORALE PRELUDES.

Before discussing the chorale preludes collected and revised by Bach in his later years, it seems reasonable to glance at the large number of miscellaneous examples. So many are obviously of early date that on chronological grounds they should be dealt with before such mature collections as the Preludes in the "Clavierübung" and the set of Eighteen Preludes revised (and in some cases probably written) at Leipsic.

These miscellaneous pieces are in Books XVIII. and XIX. of the Novello edition, the former containing forty, the latter twelve, with four sets of variations, the last being the wonderful canonic movements on "Vom Himmel hoch."

A fair number of these preludes have little interest for us to-day, and had Bach lived long enough to finish his work of selection we may be sure that he would have discarded the weakest of them. Some are merely chorales plainly harmonized, with florid interludes between the phrases—the kind of thing we find in some of our own hymn-books of a generation ago, and even of fairly recent date in Germany. These arrangements were used for accompanying, and we may look on them with a kindly eye because we know that they were the primitive forms to which we owe some of the most beautiful things in organ music.

The development from the primitive type to the highly-wrought movement may easily be traced in Book XVIII. On page 58 we have a chorale set forth in the plainest way, with a pause on the final note of each phrase, followed by a silent rest during which the player flourished. On page 53 is an example slightly more florid in its harmonization, and with the flourishes written out. The examples on pages 70 and 74 carry us a stage further. The former begins plainly, but in the phrase following the double-bar the melody is treated in the coloratura style, the decorative scheme being then dropped. The example on page 74 contains the flourishes between the phrases, but makes a move in the direction of homogeneity by its florid harmonization. In its third phrase, too, the melody temporarily disappears in the soaring exuberance of the right-hand part. Observe also that two phrases of the melody are used in combination, the fourth having for bass an imitation of the first. Now turn to the Prelude on "In dulci jubilo," on page 61, and see this primitive interlude form developed and used with such freedom and vigour that the result is one of the most effective of Christmas postludes.

The two Preludes on "Liebster Jesu" (pages 70 and 71) show us the coloratura style attempted and almost accomplished. In the first we see it adopted for one phrase only; in the second it is carried out consistently save for the beginning of the second phrase, where Bach is content to leave the first three melody notes plain save for a mordente. Though not quite perfect, this little piece has a tender feeling of its own. For a perfect specimen of this method, we may take the

Prelude on "Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend" (page 50), and note how the simple tune grows into a long-drawn melodic line of beautiful delicacy.

The possibilities of a brief statement of the tune, with very slight decoration, are well shown in the exquisite little piece on "Herzlich that mich verlangen" ("My heart is filled with longing"), on page 53. Its appeal depends on several factors—the perfect harmonization, the interest of the accompanying parts, and the broken utterance obviously evoked by the word "verlangen." It is a melancholy fact that there are hundreds of organ students wasting precious hours over the least successful of Bach's fugues, and at the same time unaware of such gems as this. Every young player who has reached the Eight-short-preludes-and-fugues stage should surely be working at the pick of the shorter and easier chorale preludes as well. He will soon exhaust the somewhat slender interest of the Eight, whereas he will never be too old or sophisticated to respond to the appeal of such music as

*Adagio.*

A musical score for organ, featuring three staves of music. The top staff is in G major (two sharps) and consists of quarter notes. The middle staff is in C major (no sharps or flats) and consists of eighth-note pairs. The bottom staff is in C major and consists of quarter notes. The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The tempo is marked as Adagio.



Book XVIII. contains some varied examples of chorale fugues, the best being a pleasant and obviously youthful one on "Allein Gott" (page 7); the curiously impressive piece on "Durch Adam's Fall" (page 28), called a fugue, but really a prelude in the Pachelbel style, with polyphony vocal rather than instrumental; the naive and genial movement, for manuals only, on "In dich hab' ich gehoffet, Herr" (page 59); the intimate little "Das Jesulein" (page 24); and, far and away the best of all, the fine fugue on the "Magnificat," the subject being the first half of the *Tonus Peregrinus*. It is worked out in four parts on the manual until the ninety-seventh bar, at which point the plainsong is delivered in long notes by the pedals, the result being a fine *Coda* of thirty-nine bars. Schweitzer calls this work "sublime"—a description that seems over-generous until we hear it played at a good pace (the minim as unit) with a fine body of diapason tone, and for its final section a pedal reed able to speak through the full organ. Failing this latter requirement, the pedals should be played in octaves. The movement is rather difficult at the required pace, and is a good study in four-part manual playing.

The Prelude on "Ein' feste Burg" (page 30) is interesting chiefly because it is one of the few cases in which we have definite registration indicated by Bach himself. The piece was played by Bach at the reopening of the Mülhausen organ, the renovation of which had been carried out under his supervision. He began with the curious combination of bassoon 16-ft. in the left hand and sesquialtera in the right. The latter must be understood to signify a group of stops. Spitta says that, in accordance with Bach's specification, "a *tertia* had been put into the Brustpositiv, with which, in combination with several other stops, a good full sesquialtera tone may be obtained." At bar 20 Bach went over to the Rückpositiv with both hands, the Pedal here making its first entry. From bars 24-32 he returned to the two manuals with which he began, both no doubt strengthened in order to balance the pedal, which here has a couple of phrases of the chorale, probably brought out by the improved posaune. Bars 33-39 were played on the third manual, and with the three semiquavers at the end of bar 39 (not 37, as Schweitzer suggests), Bach went with both hands to the Rückpositiv, with manuals coupled, the full organ coming on at the fiftieth bar. Despite its thinness, the prelude is a spirited affair well worth playing to-day, though we cannot reproduce Bach's registration, owing to our three-manual organs rarely possessing a Choir of the right power or brilliance. The registration suggested in the Novello edition is a good substitute for the original, except in bars 39-50, where the Choir solo with Swell accompaniment seems rather tame; the final *ff* would be led into better by Great diapasons.

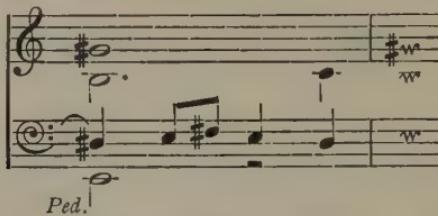
Good short pieces of a solid type, excellent for voluntary purposes and capital studies of moderate difficulty, are the Preludes on "Der Tag der ist so freudenreich" (page 26), "Christum wir sollen loben schon" (page 23), "Gottes Sohn ist kommen" (page 42), and "Gelobet seist du" (page 39).

The long setting of the Te Deum (page 44) may be passed over. It was evidently written to serve as an accompaniment, and is hopelessly tedious as a solo. It has some good five-part harmony, often of a modal character, and is interesting in that it shows us Bach accompanying with an eye on the text. Reference to the angelic host brings forth the customary scale-passages, and the supplicatory verses have the usual chromatic background.

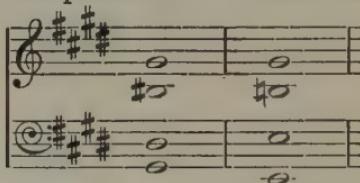
Some of the Preludes for manuals alone are too good to be neglected, both as studies and on their musical merits. The best is the lengthy Fantasia on "Jesu, meine Freude" (page 64), a beautiful piece of three-part writing. The concluding section in 3-8 time is different in character from the rest, and is based on a little motive from the fine chorus "Death, I do not fear thee," in the Motet on the chorale. The reference seems to be to the words "He that reigns will rend my chains."

Of the three pieces on "Ach Gott und Herr," the second and third repay study. The former is a closely-packed page of ingenuity, and not without appeal as music; the second is a poignant canon on a minor version of the tune. How square-toed and tedious the Pachelbel form of prelude may become is well shown in "Ich hab' mein' Sach' Gott heimgestellt" (page 54). The fault is partly

that of the tune, which hangs so much round a few notes that it cannot stand the test of being repeated and augmented. Bach does his best, but the tune beats him. He scores a point in bar 2 on page 55, however, by giving us on the fourth beat a very modern harmonic touch :



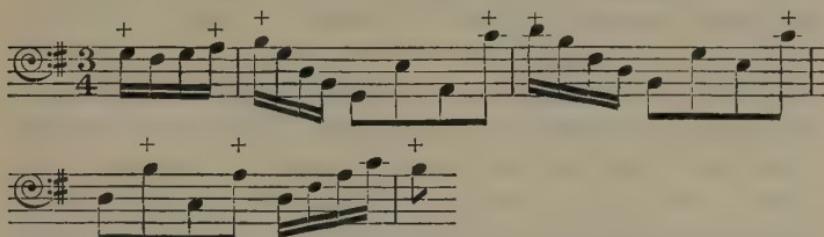
Bach here hints at a progression very popular with modern composers. In this form :



made more enigmatic by the C♯ being called B♯, and by the doubling of the G♯, it is the basis of a good many delightful passages.

The Prelude on "Nun freut euch" (page 80) is an appropriately joyous expression of the text of the hymn ("Rejoice now, Christian souls"). If we play it at recitals we should make it clear by means of a programme note that the piece has nothing to do with the Advent hymn to which the tune is invariably sung in England. The Prelude may be played as a trio, but is perhaps better with both manual parts played on Great *f*, with 16-ft., 8-ft., 4-ft., and 2-ft. diapasons, provided we have an 8-ft. pedal reed strong enough to make the chorale stand out. The effect is very brilliant and festive.

Two delightful settings for manual only are the Preludes on "Allein Gott" ("Glory be to God on high") on pages 5 and 11. The former is headed "Bicinium," an old term for any short two-part composition. The melody is played by the right hand, while the left covers a great deal of ground at a quick pace, with a part based on the tune. Here is the opening, with the melody notes marked:



The right whirling effect of the left-hand part is got only when the piece is played at a high speed. The suggested  $\text{♩} = 84$  is on the staid side:  $\text{♩} = 104$  is better, and gives the left hand a fine bit of exercise. The Prelude on page 11 is a flowing three-part treatment—a valuable study in polyphonic playing and an attractive piece of music.

The Prelude on "Erbarm' dich mein" ("Have mercy upon me"), and the second of the two pieces on "Christ lag in Todesbanden," have been mentioned on pages 11 and 12 respectively.

Only one more number in Book XVIII. calls for notice—the great five-part Prelude on "An Wasserflüssen Babylon" ("By the Waters of Babylon"), a movement that appears to have been written in Bach's prime. Griepenkerl tells us that it does not exist in the autograph. In Krebs' manuscript book it appears coupled with the four-part version which Bach included in the set of Eighteen Preludes he collected at Leipsic.

The two movements in Krebs' book are headed, "Vers 1, a 5 con 2 Clav. e dopp. Ped, Vers 2, alio modo a 4 con 2 Clav. e simp. Ped." Both are very similar in material. The five-part version is one of the finest double-pedal studies imaginable, besides being a beautiful piece of music. The pedal stops should be of 8-ft. pitch, and if they are of string quality so much the better. Flute-tone is apt to become vague at the bottom of the keyboard unless pointed by the addition of 4-ft. Such an addition would be out of place here, so 'cello tone is the telling quality we should aim at. We may then play the two left-hand parts on the Choir or Great, with 8-ft. flute or lieblich, the melody being given to a soft reed. The opening phrases of the chorale are quoted :

Why bother about purely technical studies in double pedalling when there are such works as this waiting to be played? The organist who can go easily through the eighty bars of "An Wasserflüssen Babylon" is ready for anything of the kind, and will, moreover, have in his répertoire a piece he will not easily outgrow.

Book XIX. need not detain us long, as some of its contents have already been discussed in Section I. The volume opens well with two splendid pieces on "Valet will ich dir geben" ("Farewell will I give thee")—the tune familiar in England through its association with the hymn "All glory, laud, and honour." The first of the pair shows us the Pachelbel method at its best. Bach had evidently come to the conclusion that the plan of announcing a chorale melody line by line, unaccompanied, and then proceeding to treat each line fugally, is apt to lead to both scrappiness and monotony unless the tune is a short one. Here he binds the whole long movement together by episodical matter, and the announcement of the various phrases is saved from the usual thin effect by an accompanying part of an animated character.

Good as this Prelude is, its companion is perhaps finer. The tune is given to the pedals in minims, under a brilliant three-part *moto perpetuo*. The rapid manual passages are throughout based on the tune, though the connection does not always leap to the eye. Examination will show that the fine blend of unity and variety is largely due to the way each phrase of the tune is anticipated by suggestion rather than by statement—a subtle development of the Pachelbel method. The following quotation gives an idea of the buoyant

energy of the music, and at \* shows a striking use of the progression quoted on page 198. There it was probably a chance shot : here it is deliberate :

(In the Peters edition the bass of this passage consists of three A's, an obvious blunder, which turns a striking progression into a commonplace.)

Reger evidently had this prelude at the back of his mind when writing his tremendous "Jauchz', Erd, und Himmel, juble!" Not only are the key and the rhythmic scheme the same; twice he makes use of the progression under notice—at the beginning of bar 8, and again in bar 23. The

second of these passages is a hammer-stroke worthy of his great model:

*Very quick.*

Both of these “Valet will ich dir geben” pieces make a ready appeal, and deserve to be far better known than they appear to be. It should be noted that the bustling animation of their “valet” is expressive of the joy of one whose impending journey is homewards. There is no “sadness of farewell” at the end of a pilgrimage.

The severe little Prelude on “Vater unser” (“Our Father”), page 12, may be played with any degree of power from *p* to *fff* with equally good effect. Its polyphony owes something to the vocal style of the Palestrina school, and is beautifully knit. Observe the continuity obtained by the sparing use of full closes.

The three pieces on “Vom Himmel hoch” (“From heaven above to earth I come”) differ widely. The first is a vivacious three-voice fugetta for manuals, surprisingly difficult to play quickly and cleanly, and therefore a valuable finger study. The second is a fugue, obviously an early effort, and one of Bach’s dull movements, so we may mercifully pass it by. The third is a fine,

compact little piece, full of interest and effect, especially in the cross-rhythms of bar 12, where the treble has crotchets, the alto quaver-triplets, the tenor semiquaver sextolets, and the bass quaver duplets :

The image shows three staves of organ music. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature is G major (no sharps or flats). The time signature is 4/4. The music consists of three systems of four measures each. Measure 12 is highlighted in each system. The first system starts with a whole note in the treble, followed by a measure of eighth-note pairs in the alto, a measure of sixteenth-note triplets in the bass, and a measure of eighth-note pairs in the treble. The second system starts with a measure of eighth-note pairs in the treble, followed by a measure of sixteenth-note triplets in the alto, a measure of eighth-note pairs in the bass, and a measure of eighth-note pairs in the treble. The third system starts with a measure of eighth-note pairs in the treble, followed by a measure of sixteenth-note triplets in the alto, a measure of eighth-note pairs in the bass, and a measure of eighth-note pairs in the treble. Measure 12 is indicated by a brace under the first two measures of each system. The bassoon part (bottom staff) features sixteenth-note sextolets in the first two measures of each system. The alto part (middle staff) features eighth-note pairs in the first two measures of each system. The treble part (top staff) features eighth-note pairs in the first two measures of each system. The bassoon part (bottom staff) features eighth-note pairs in the first two measures of each system. The alto part (middle staff) features eighth-note pairs in the first two measures of each system. The treble part (top staff) features eighth-note pairs in the first two measures of each system.

The only other preludes of importance are the pleasant piece on "Wir Christenleut" ("We Christian folk to-day have joy") and the five-part treatment of "Wir glauben all'" ("We all believe in one God, Father"). The latter is a double pedal study, less difficult than that on "An Wasserflüssen Babylon." There are fewer skips, and the whole, both on manuals and pedals, lies more comfortably. It is a beautiful piece of writing. The best effect seems to be obtained by giving the solo to a flute stop, against a string quartet background. The cadenza should be toned down by a change of solo stop, and we must not allow the demisemiquaver notation to lead us into dashing it off. The *rallentando* should begin with the last note of the tune, and the flourish should be elastic and slackening to the end.

The Trio on "Wo soll ich fliehen hin?" ("Whither shall I fly?") is rather tedious. We shall find Bach treating the same idea much more happily in the Schübeler set of preludes.

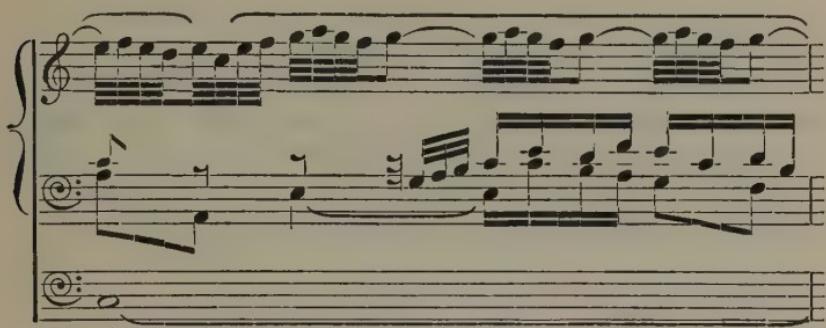
Of the three groups of variations that follow, only a few of those on "Sei gegrüsset Jesu güting" ("Hail to Thee, my Jesu holy") date from Bach's maturity. This is evident both from the writing in general and from the independent pedal part. The early partitas, as we have seen, were for manuals only, or with sketchy *ad lib.* pedal passages. Some of the variations of this set on "Sei gegrüsset" evidently date from a late period. We shall not go far wrong if we decide that Nos. 1-6 were written at Lüneburg, and Nos. 7-11 at Weimar or Cöthen. These last five variations are well worthy of attention, if only as studies.

Particularly good are the melodious and expressive No. 10 and the massive five-voiced No. 11.

Bach's crowning work in the chorale variation field is the wonderful set of canons on the Christmas hymn, "Vom Himmel hoch," with which this book closes. There is a disposition to regard them merely as examples of consummate craft. They are that, of course, but, save for a few dry passages, they are delightful music as well.

Parry says: "The musical effect in these variations is subordinated to the display of skill. The third and fourth variations contain some beautiful music: otherwise . . . the tribute to the chorale is rather of the head than of the heart." He goes on to remark that Bach had so habitually used his skill in the expression of devotion that he had apparently come to regard the skill itself as something sacred—a variant of *laborare est orare* worth considering. Schweitzer thinks that Bach's only purpose in writing the variations was "to pack into a single chorale the complete art of canon. . . . If this work already shows the tendency to abstract thought that was characteristic of his last years, there is, for all that, a good deal of emotion in these chorale arrangements. They are full of Christmas joyousness and cheeriness." Anything like an attempt to describe the feats of skill shown here would take up far more space than can be spared. Nor is it necessary; without a copy the reader would hardly be helped, and with one he is in no need of assistance. Far more important is it to recommend him to play the movements. Only the last will give him much trouble. Not many players will be insensible to the simple tunefulness of the first two, and the

calm meditative contentment of the third and fourth—especially the latter, with its long-drawn *quasi* violin solo, of which the delicious ending must be quoted. (Note that the pedal stop is 4-ft., the harmony of the first bar being thus a chord of A minor in root position, not a first inversion) :



The final variation opens with more skill than attractiveness, but after the introduction of the semiquavers it makes ample amends, and there is music even in the closing *tour de force*—a simultaneous use of all the four phrases of the tune. Parry's description of this closing passage is very

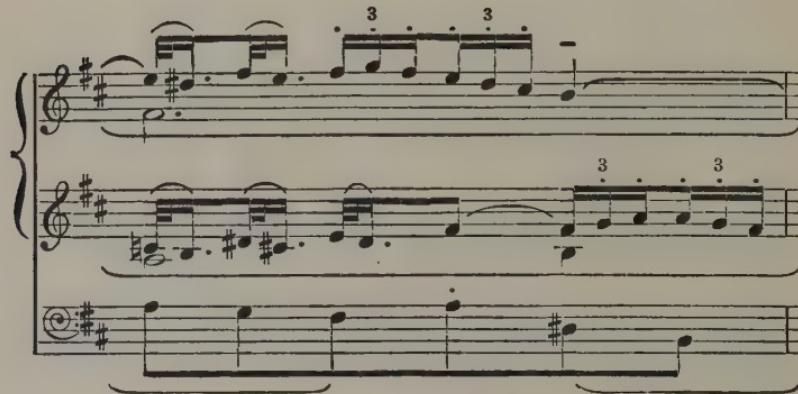
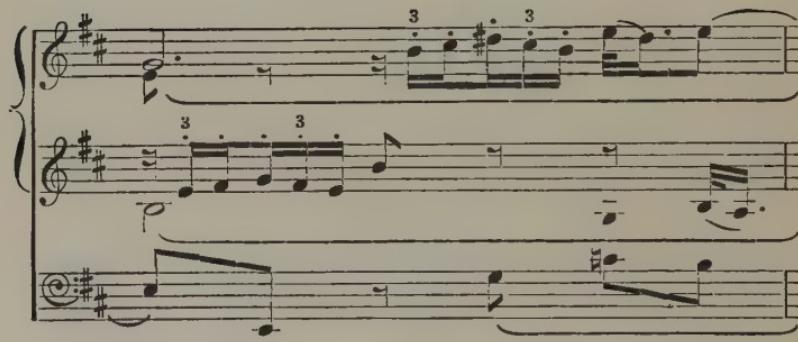
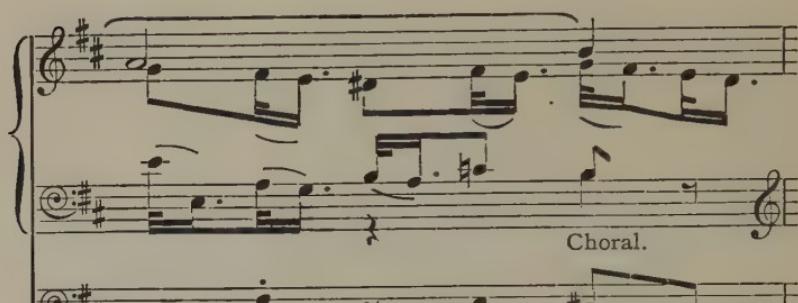
happy: ". . . ending in five parts, including pedal, with a profusion of little canons in diminution, which seem to be tumbling over one another in their eagerness to get into the scheme before the inexorable limits of formal proportion shut the door with the final cadence."

The two books we have been considering are a very mixed bag, so to speak. The proportion of indifferent music is considerable, as is bound to be the case in a posthumous collection. But there are some notable things, and no organist can afford to neglect volumes containing such pieces as the best of those described above—works worthy of a place among the cream of Bach's organ music.

## VIII.—THE CHORALE PRELUDES IN THE “CLAVIERÜBUNG.”

The “Clavierübung” is a comprehensive work in four parts, the first of which appeared in 1731 and the fourth about 1742. Bach borrowed the title from Kuhnau, who produced a “Neue Clavierübung” (New Clavier Exercises) in 1695. Part 3 of Bach’s work (1739) consists of organ music—the great Prelude in E flat, followed by twenty-one Chorale Preludes, the whole being rounded off by the Fugue in E flat popularly known as “St. Anne’s.” Special interest attaches to the “Clavierübung”: it shows Bach at his best both as organ and clavier composer, and it was almost certainly the first of his works to be engraved. Impatient young composers of to-day, with somewhat less to say than Bach, may profitably reflect on this latter point, remembering also that John Sebastian was at that time well past his fortieth year.

Consideration of the E flat Prelude and Fugue may well be postponed until we come to the final group of works in that form. It is not easy to see why these two movements were included in a collection of pieces based on chorale melodies. The Fugue is not out of place, because its subject might well pass for the opening strain of a chorale, but the Prelude is obviously an intruder. It is



The image displays two staves of musical notation for organ. The top staff features a melodic line with grace notes and slurs, primarily in the soprano and alto voices. The bottom staff provides harmonic support, with bass and pedal voices. The notation uses standard musical symbols like quarter and eighth notes, with specific note heads and stems. A repeat sign is present, and a section labeled "&c." indicates a continuation of the pattern.

We have here one of several examples of Bach's feeling for the modes. The key is E minor with a C sharp in the signature—that is, the Dorian mode transposed up a tone. Free as is the harmony, the modal flavour is evident, just as it is in the Dorian Toccata, despite its modulations.

The flow of a river is one of the easiest of subjects for musical treatment, so we are not surprised to find Bach seizing on the word “Jordan” in “Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam.” The tune is played by the pedals with

pedal may play a big part. The grindingly discordant *Coda* is best phrased thus:

Musical score for orchestra and piano, page 10, measures 11-12. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is for the strings (Violins I & II, Violas, Cellos), the second staff is for the woodwinds (Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon), the third staff is for the piano basso (Cello/Piano), and the bottom staff is for the piano treble (Piano). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). Measure 11 starts with a forte dynamic (f) in the woodwind section. Measure 12 begins with a piano dynamic (p) in the piano basso and ends with a repeat sign and a double bar line.

Following as it does a long spell of animated quaver movement, the effect of this weighty peroration, with its insistent two-note motive and its daring harmony, is quite extraordinary.

The three settings of the Kyrie for manuals only are admirable little studies in part-playing.

The first of the three preludes on "Allein Gott" is a rather dry affair for manual only, and may well be left alone. The second is a lengthy Trio, showing Bach at his happiest, as the form usually does. It is well worth a place by the side of

the best of the Trio-Sonatas. For its proper performance three uncoupled manuals and pedals are called for—two of the manuals for the delivery of the two semiquaver parts, the third with a rather more telling stop for the phrases of the chorale. This beautifully finished piece is a fine study, and with good registration can be made very attractive. The third piece on this melody is a bright little fughetta for manuals only, calling for a neat finger and good phrasing.

The long movement on “*Dies sind die heil’gen zehn Gebot*” is an interesting failure. Bach writes two parts for the right hand, and a pedal part, all three moving freely. In the middle of this trio appears the chorale melody, in long notes, worked as a canon in the octave. The result is unsatisfactory, from both musical and descriptive points of view. The chorale contains so many repeated notes that its delivery in augmentation, especially in canon, gives an effect of stagnation. As programme music the work fails because Bach seems to have tried to do too much. No doubt Schweitzer is right when he says that the free parts represent the moral disorder of the world, while the slow canon which forms the core of the piece stands for the law. But if Bach aimed at a musical picture of the eternal conflict between order and disorder he was asking too much of his medium. Music, above all the arts, excels at showing chaos and cosmos in alternation, but it cannot show them together. Only the painter can do that.

The manual piece on this chorale is a gay fughetta. What does Bach mean here? Perhaps he set out to do no more than enjoy himself in

toying with the engaging subject evolved from the first phrase of the tune. Still, we cannot overlook the fact that this subject appears ten times, so there must be some reference to the Commandments. There may even be significance in the fact that the subject is inverted in entries 5-8, the Commandments from No. 5 onwards being concerned specially with human relationships. This is just the kind of childlike symbolism Bach indulged in all his life. We may smile at it, just as we smile at old Johnson touching the tops of posts as he rolled his way down Fleet Street, but we like our great men none the less—rather the more—for such little weaknesses. One thing seems to be clear in regard to this Prelude. Bach surely meant its cheerful animation to express the idea that liberty, not bondage, is the result of obedience to the Law—"whose service is perfect freedom."

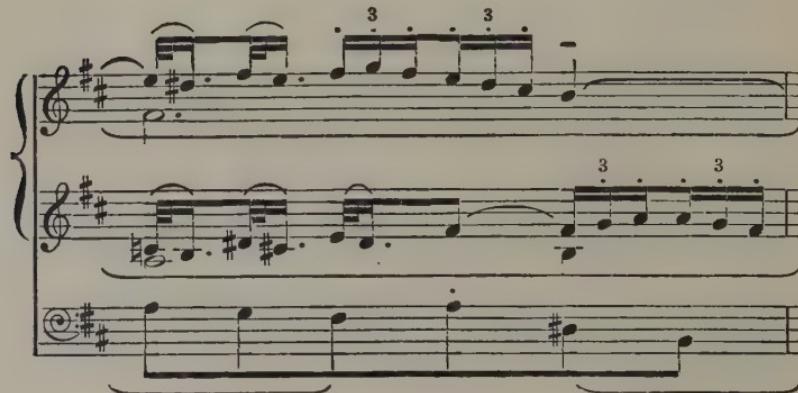
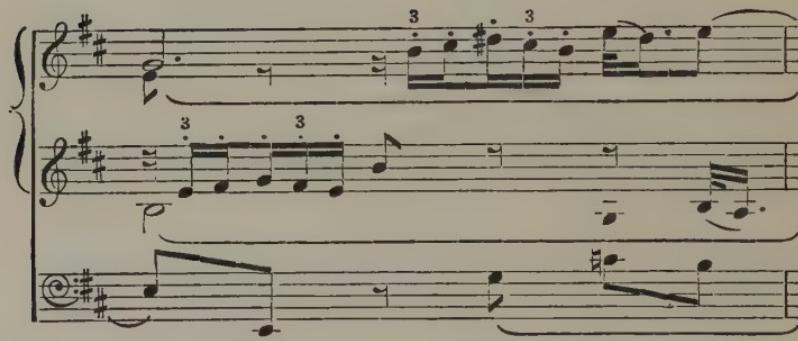
The Prelude on "Wir glauben all'" is one of the most familiar of all Bach's organ works in this country, owing to its having had the good fortune to be included in the earlier books of preludes and fugues in the Novello edition. Its popularity makes one regret that the chorale preludes as a whole have hitherto played so small a part in the organ students' curriculum. There are dozens of preludes more attractive than this so-called "Giant" fugue. Had our organ students during the past thirty years played them as often as the "Giant," both players and public would have a far juster estimation of Bach than at present obtains. There is no need to dwell long on "Wir glauben all'." It may be well to point out that the ground bass is obviously intended to typify

faith, and that the less we think of a giant walking upstairs and tumbling down again (*vide* some programme notes) the better. The subject of the fugue is based on the opening phrase of the chorale, and Bach rounds off the movement by introducing the final phrase of the tune in the tenor, beginning on the E in the ninth bar from the end. The words to which this phrase is sung are “All things are governed by His might.” This thoroughly Bachian stroke is usually overlooked, because the chorale is not well-known in this country.

The first of the two pieces on “Vater unser” is one of the longest, most complex, and most difficult of all the chorale preludes. The writing is in five parts—an almost continuously moving quaver bass, and four manual parts, two consisting of the chorale melody in canon, and two highly florid counterpoints of unusual rhythmical variety. The latter are treated imitatively, and are developments of an ornate version of the opening phrase of the chorale. This piece has to be known and lived with for some time before one realises its undoubtedly beauty. Here is an extract showing the entry of the first phrase of the chorale and a portion of the canon in the tenor :

Choral.

216 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH



We have here one of several examples of Bach's feeling for the modes. The key is E minor with a C sharp in the signature—that is, the Dorian mode transposed up a tone. Free as is the harmony, the modal flavour is evident, just as it is in the Dorian Toccata, despite its modulations.

The flow of a river is one of the easiest of subjects for musical treatment, so we are not surprised to find Bach seizing on the word “Jordan” in “Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam.” The tune is played by the pedals with

4-ft. or 8-ft. tone, while the river is represented by an undulating passage of semiquavers on the manuals, generally in the bass. The piece should be played at a good pace, and with fairly loud tone. The left hand may well be played on a separate manual with a soft 16-ft. added to 8-ft. and perhaps 4-ft. as well. At anything less than a quick pace the music loses on the descriptive side, and, moreover, one is conscious of a lack of originality in some of the sequential passages. The manual prelude on this chorale is a very skilful little piece in which Schweitzer sees an attempt to represent big and little waves rising and falling. The effect is one for the eye rather than the ear, and it must be confessed that the musical result is on the dry side.

It is sometimes said that architecture is frozen music. In the first of the two preludes on "Aus tiefer Noth," a massive six-part affair with double pedal, we surely have the reverse—architecture in sound, and church architecture at that. The ecclesiastical style of the polyphony, the pronounced flavour of the Phrygian mode, and the dark effect due to four of the six voices lying in the lower half of the keyboard, combine to produce a masterpiece of impersonal gloom. Of emotion in the ordinary sense of the term there is none: the music is simply a tremendous abstraction. The method of treating the chorale is that associated with Pachelbel, but there is a closeness of texture and a skill of which Pachelbel never dreamt. A quotation of the passage containing the first phrase of the melody augmented, in the first bass part, will repay examination. It will be seen that the first treble and the second tenor also deliver

the theme, so that it appears in three parts simultaneously:

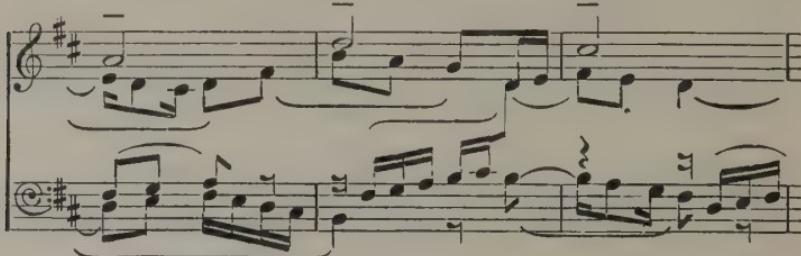
The image displays three staves of musical notation, likely for a piano or organ, illustrating the simultaneous appearance of the 'Aus Tiefer Not' theme in three parts. The notation is in common time and consists of measures 1 through 4 of the piece.

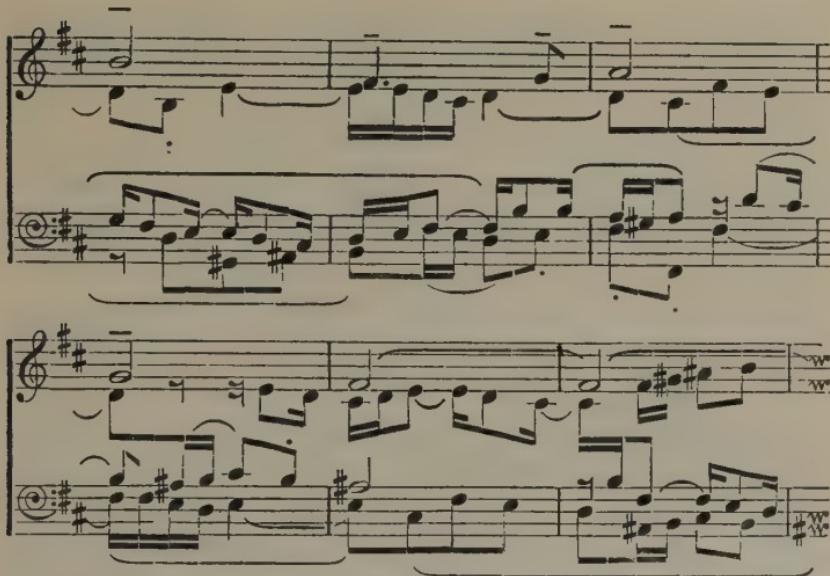
- Top Staff:** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with eighth-note pairs followed by quarter notes and sixteenth-note patterns.
- Middle Staff:** Bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). It features sustained bass notes and eighth-note chords.
- Bottom Staff:** Bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). It provides harmonic support with sustained notes and eighth-note chords.

Brackets above the staves group the measures into four measures of music. Measure 1 starts with a forte dynamic. Measures 2 and 3 continue the melodic line with eighth-note pairs and sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 4 concludes the excerpt with a final cadence.

Opinions differ as to whether 16-ft. stops should be used for the pedal. I believe Best used to play the piece *ff* with heavy pedal stops. A good deal depends on the size of the building, but as a rule a safe plan will be to use loudish 8-ft. diapasons for the manuals, and 8-ft. and *soft* 16-ft. for the pedals. This gives the right sombre strength without turgidity. Spitta says of this monumental piece that it is the crowning point of the collection, "from the ingenuity of the part-writing, the wealth and nobility of the harmonies, and the executive power which it requires."

Its companion prelude, for manuals only, is in some respects even more skilful. Each phrase of the chorale is treated imitatively in the three under parts before being introduced at the top in long notes, and in every instance one of the imitations is by inversion. Nor is this all. In most cases the melody on its appearance in the treble is accompanied by itself in diminution and by inversion. The most astonishing fact, however, is that the result is beautifully expressive music. Here is the final phrase of the tune, with three diminutions in the under parts, one inverted :





In the Breitkopf & Härtel edition the bass is given to the pedals, and the tenor played on a separate manual, with good effect.

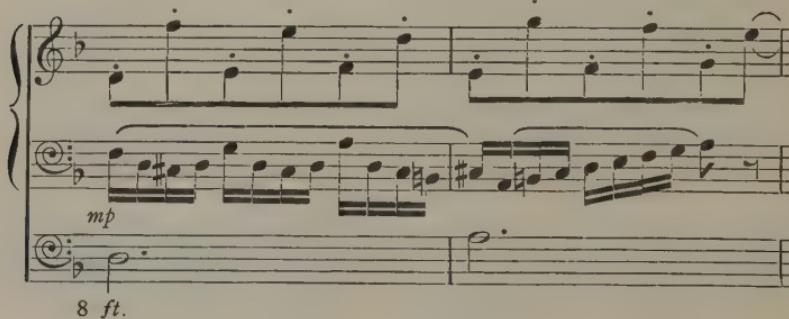
The long piece on "Jesus Christus unser Heiland" is much less appealing. It consists of a kind of two-part fugue, the voices being played on separate manuals, around the chorale melody in the tenor, delivered in long notes on the pedals with 8-ft. stops. The subject is a wide-straddling, energetic figure entirely devoid of feeling or grace, and its treatment does nothing to soften its rough outlines :

*Allegro moderato. ♩ = 88.*

*p Ch. 8 ft.*

 A musical score for organ. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The bass staff has a dynamic marking "p Ch. 8 ft." below it. The music consists of two measures. In the first measure, the bass staff has a sustained note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The treble staff has a sustained note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. In the second measure, the bass staff has a sustained note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The treble staff has a sustained note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern.

Schweitzer truly says that it is characteristic rather than musical, belonging as it does to the family of "step" motives with which Bach was wont to depict faith. The prevailing bleakness of the work was probably evoked by the hymn's reference to the Passion. Schweitzer complains that the theme is developed at too great length, and that the work is not organic because the *cantus*, appearing in fragments at long intervals, is not sufficient to hold the music together. There is something in this objection, and yet the piece's genuine power and bigness\* (despite the fact of its being largely in two-part harmony) get hold of one on due acquaintance. I quote a few bars, showing the first pedal entry. In bars four and five observe how, by the simple expedient of retarding the right-hand passage a quarter-beat, Bach keeps up the semiquaver motion, though both hands are concerned with a subject in quavers :



\* But much depends upon the pace and registration. Since the above was written I have heard Marcel Dupré play this Prelude, with light stops, and at such a pace that it became a brilliant *Scherzo*.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for organ. The top staff consists of three staves: treble, bass, and bass. The bottom staff also consists of three staves: bass, bass, and bass. The notation includes various note heads, stems, and bar lines. The second staff ends with a brace and the text "&c."

The companion Prelude and the last of the set is a well-worked fugue, for manuals only, on the first phrase of the tune. In the Breitkopf & Härtel edition it appears with the bass played by the pedals—an arrangement which justifies itself by increasing the solemnity of an already impressive movement.

Taking the "Clavierübung" Preludes as a whole it must be admitted that they are less appealing than most of Bach's other ripe essays in this field. From a technical point of view they show him at his greatest, but there is a lack of the intimate feeling of the "Little Organ Book," and only at intervals do we find the depth of

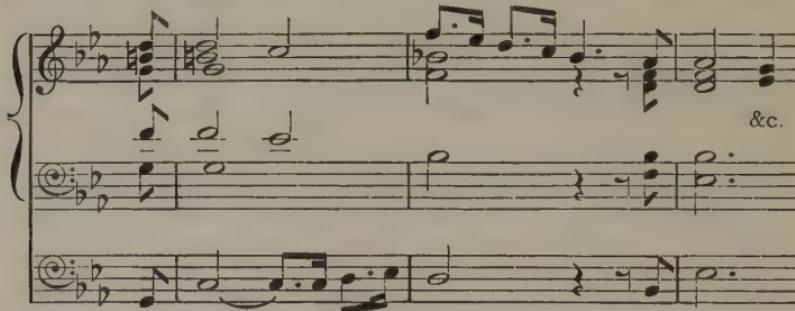
expression that is so pronounced in the set of Eighteen Preludes collected and revised by Bach some years later.

Perhaps this comparative coldness may be ascribed to the fact of the pieces being written as musical illustrations of a series of doctrinal formulæ. The choice of material was thus not in Bach's hands, having been settled long before by Luther. Moreover, as we have seen, the collection appears to have been written in a comparatively short period with a view to inclusion in a work already partly published. Bach's technical and intellectual faculties were then at their height, so he had no difficulty in carrying out his project in a manner that compels admiration. No doubt the task was a congenial one, but it was task-work none the less, and so with a few notable exceptions it was accomplished by brain rather than by heart. The height to which Bach could rise in treating a chorale when both these factors played an equal part we shall see later.

## IX.—THE LEIPSIC PRELUDES AND FUGUES.

As we have seen, the Prelude and Fugue in E flat (VI., 28) appeared in Part 3 of the "Clavier-übung," the two movements being separated by twenty-one chorale preludes. One would have thought that the fact of Bach's publishing the two pieces in this way would have shown clearly that they had no connection. Griepenkerl seems to have been the first to print them together, "not arbitrarily," he says, "but following an old tradition which Forkel communicated forty years ago, as the two pieces are so nearly allied in spirit and form that every connoisseur, even without this tradition, will immediately recognise them as one whole." Spitta also discovers "an inward connection, which may be seen in the quiet stateliness common to both," and goes on to say that Forkel "expressly testifies to their connection on the authority of Bach's sons." Bach's sons showed so little respect for their father's memory and works that we may be forgiven for holding their testimony lightly. No doubt some players from the first felt that the Fugue needed a kind of introduction, and naturally tacked on the Prelude —the only suitable organ piece of Bach in print at the time. The pieces having thus been joined together, no subsequent editor dare put them

asunder. We may leave them together, but it is high time we gave up pretending to see any "inward connection" or alliance "in spirit and form." The Prelude is obviously much the earlier in date, and even more obviously inferior in inspiration and workmanship. Its main theme is stately enough to compel and hold attention, but a good deal of the remaining material shows Bach for once in a way lacking in resource. There is far too much mere repetition in the case of the second subject, and in the fugal passages the harmonization of the subject is almost invariably the same, with monotonous result. This is not like Bach at his ripest and best. Nor can this short cut back to the opening key and theme :



be regarded as a good piece of joinery. There is plenty of fine music in the Prelude, despite these faults, and, played at a good pace, with well-planned registration, it is effective. At the sedate *tempo* usually indicated, it seems (like a badly-delivered sermon) even longer than it is, and desperately dull, especially if the registration be almost uniformly loud. The Novello and Peters editions suggest  $\text{♩} = 76$ , the Augener edition  $\text{♩} = 100$ , the latter being not a bit too quick.

It is interesting to recall that Mendelssohn played the Prelude and Fugue as a whole, and, further, that he regarded the Prelude as likely to hit English taste. Writing to his mother from Bingen, July 13, 1837, he says: "Ask Fanny, dear Mother, what she says to my intention of playing Bach's organ Prelude in E flat major at Birmingham, and the Fugue at the end of the same book [*i.e.*, the "Clavierübung"]. I suspect she will disapprove this, and yet I think I am right. I have an idea that *this* very prelude will be peculiarly acceptable to the English, and you can play both prelude and fugue *piano* and *pianissimo*, and also bring out the full power of the organ. Faith! I can tell you it is no stupid composition."

The Fugue is one of the most perfect of all Bach's essays, and one of the most popular of organ solos. The fact is worth noting, because the work makes no concessions to the gallery. It has not the brilliance of the D major Fugue or the D minor Toccata, nor the buoyant tunefulness of the "great" G minor Fugue, and it gives comparatively little scope for technical display, either on manuals or pedals. There is not much the matter with the musical taste of a public that seems ever ready to hear such a work. The sources of popularity, however, are as curiously mixed as human motives, and it is probable that this Fugue owes much of its vogue to its apparent connection with Croft's hymn tune, as well as to the fact of its having been one of the first of Bach's organ works to become well known in this country. A title is a great help to a piece of music, and undoubtedly "St. Anne's Fugue" is far more appealing than "Fugue in E flat." There is no

need to-day to point out that Bach could hardly have heard Croft's tune. The character of the subject, however, suggests that Bach had a hymn tune at the back of his mind. It is perhaps daring to surmise that the Fugue is really a chorale prelude based on the opening phrase of the melody of "Was mein Gott will":



Yet there may be something in it. True, the first two notes are transposed, but they may have appeared thus in a variant of the tune. The text is just the kind of thing Bach might have chosen wherewith to round off a collection of preludes:

What my God wills be done alway,  
His purpose is the best ;  
He still abides my strength and stay,  
The Rock whereon I rest.

Prout, in his analysis of this Fugue, after dismissing the "St. Anne" theory, says: "It seems more probable that the melody is that of an old German chorale, especially as it is also employed by Handel in his Chandos anthem, 'O praise the Lord with one consent.'" It is this evident connection with a chorale melody that makes the Fugue a fitting close to the "Clavierübung" collection of chorale preludes, and no less certainly shows it to be independent of the Prelude to which it is now joined on such slender grounds. Moreover, a chorale basis would support the theory of Schweitzer and others that the threefold structure has reference to the Trinity. Failing such basis the theory is far-fetched. If

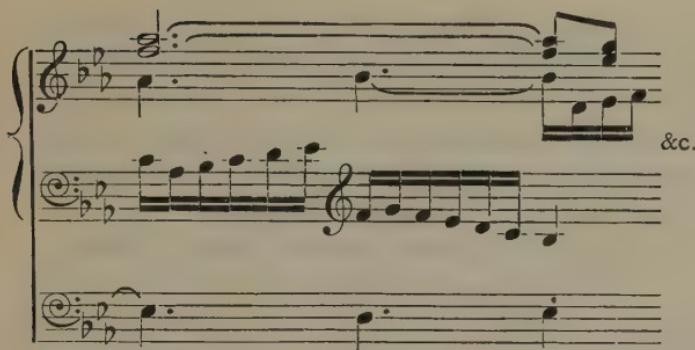
the work is an ordinary fugue, it is merely a development of the form as used by the early Italian organ composers — a series of fugal movements on a theme which undergoes metamorphoses. Or it may be a return to Buxtehude, whose fugues usually consist of three or four sections. In either case Bach has taken an unsatisfactory model, and from it evolved a perfect work. The early German and Italian examples almost invariably fail on either one of two grounds. In some cases the connection between the sections is so slight that the result lacks unity. (Occasionally there is no connection whatever, especially in some of Buxtehude's fugues.) In others the use of one subject for all the movements tends to monotony, despite the metamorphoses. It was left for Bach to apply the method in such a way as to obtain at once variety and unity—variety by three short sections of diverse character, unity in the total effect of one long and logical movement. The result is a type of fugue answering to none of the ordinary classifications. It is sometimes called a triple fugue—incorrectly, because the subjects which open the three sections are not heard together. Prout says: "In spite of its sounding like an Irish bull, the most accurate description of this fugue would be to call it 'a double fugue, with three subjects.'" Or, if we wish to avoid the bull, we may say that it consists of a double and single fugue, the first subject of the former being used as a counter-subject in the latter. Here is the formula:

A.

{ B.  
{ B and A combined.      { C.  
                                  { C and A combined.

The feeling of unity that results from this unusual scheme is remarkable, seeing that A in its combination with B and C undergoes such rhythmical changes and is opposed by such animated matter that it might easily pass unobserved by a listener unaware of its presence. Perhaps the secret of the Fugue's success is to be found chiefly in its splendid growth from the broad, calm opening through the quaver middle section for manuals only to the five-voiced third section, with its increase of animation and rhythmic intensity and its splendid pedal part. Is there a finer pedal entry in all Bach (or anywhere else) than the final one?

The musical score consists of two staves of organ music. The top staff is in treble clef and features a dynamic marking of *ff* at the beginning. It continues with a series of sixteenth-note chords and sustained notes, followed by a dynamic marking of *fff*. The bottom staff is in bass clef and shows a continuous pattern of sixteenth-note chords. The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.



Even on a small organ the A flat is fine; on an organ with a big pedal it is tremendous. This closing entry of the main theme clinches the whole lengthy argument in the most convincing way. Subjects B and C have made such brilliant play that A, with its simple gravity, has been almost pushed aside. Now it sails grandly in, with a "By your leave, there! *I am the real god in the machine!*" Mr. Heathcote Statham, in the book already quoted in this volume, says that one of our old musicians (Dr. Crotch?) remarked of this pedal entry of the subject that it sounded "as if it ought to be fired off with cannon." Berlioz, we know, hated organ fugues. "St. Anne's," discharged on Crotch's sound lines, would probably have converted him.

For those of us with normal tastes the registration of the Fugue almost settles itself. The opening calls for diapason tone, the middle section is well suited to the full Swell most players use for it, and the final portion is just as naturally an affair for full organ, with the Great reeds reserved for the closing bars.

In the three great Leipsic works remaining for consideration the preludes have so much in common

with their respective fugues, not only in their lofty spirit and consummate workmanship, but also in some of the thematic details, that, putting it colloquially, we may say they were made for one another—which, as we have seen, some other preludes and fugues certainly were not.

The qualities we missed in the E flat Prelude—continuity and growth—are present in the E minor Prelude (VIII., 98) to a degree remarkable even in Bach's work at its best. The various subjects are so connected that they appear and reappear almost without our noting the point of transition. Revelling in its nobly sustained flow, one wonders at the average classical sonata movement, with its pull-up, padding, and circumstantial ushering in of the second subject, being regarded as an advance on the form of such a piece as this. The student of composition will do well to note that there are few cadences in this movement, and that all have their cadential effect neutralised by being made points of departure for fresh or recapitulated material, so that the music never sticks. This uninterrupted march of the music is one of the signs by which we may know the mature Bach. If we want to see how even he had to learn this lesson, we may turn to the early double fugue in C minor (X., 230) wherein the cadences are not only numerous, but aggressive as well, nothing being done to tone down their effect of finality.

Perhaps some day a fascinating book will be written concerning the miracles great composers have wrought with such material as the scale, the arpeggio of the common chord, and such unconsidered trifles as leaps of a fourth, octave skips, &c. The author of such a book will find

in this Prelude an outstanding example of the scale *in excelsis*. In the Dorian Toccata and the G minor Fantasia Bach gives the pedals a scale so lengthy that, the limits of the keyboard being reached, it harks back for a series of fresh starts. In the E minor Prelude he gives us an even finer example of the extended use of a scale :

A musical score for organ or harpsichord, featuring two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves are in common time and key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of a series of eighth-note patterns. The first measure shows a descending eighth-note scale from C# to A. The second measure begins with a bass note (F#) followed by a series of eighth-note chords. The third measure shows another descending eighth-note scale from C# to A. The fourth measure begins with a bass note (F#) followed by a series of eighth-note chords. This pattern repeats throughout the page, illustrating the 'extended use of a scale' mentioned in the text.

and so on,—a passage so far-reaching and spacious as to make both the keyboard and the human ear seem puny. One chafes at their restrictions, and wants the scale to go travelling down, saying its say in one vast stretch, and plumbing depths that

no ear has yet reached. A glance at its themes shows the cause of the Prelude's splendid homogeneity:

The image displays five musical examples, labeled (a) through (e), extracted from Bach's Organ Prelude in G major. Each example is presented on a single-line staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (G major), and common time. The music consists of eighth-note patterns.

- (a)**: Features a sequence of eighth-note pairs moving sequentially up the scale (G-A, A-B, B-C, C-D, D-E, E-F#, F#-G).
- (b)**: Shows a sequence of eighth-note pairs moving sequentially up the scale (G-A, A-B, B-C, C-D, D-E, E-F#, F#-G).
- (c)**: Similar to (b), showing a sequence of eighth-note pairs moving sequentially up the scale (G-A, A-B, B-C, C-D, D-E, E-F#, F#-G).
- (d)**: Features a sequence of eighth-note pairs moving sequentially up the scale (G-A, A-B, B-C, C-D, D-E, E-F#, F#-G).
- (e)**: Shows a sequence of eighth-note pairs moving sequentially up the scale (G-A, A-B, B-C, C-D, D-E, E-F#, F#-G).

Each example concludes with the instruction "&c." indicating the motif continues.

Though strongly marked, they have characteristics in common. All are sequential, the effect in (e) being obtained by imitation; (b) and (d) are alike in rhythm; (b) and (c) are compounded of scalewise movement and leaps; and (a) and (d) both make widening leaps from a centre. There is hardly a bar in the Prelude that does not show its connection with one of these five motives. The whole movement well repays close study as a masterly example of structure and development. With its continuous motion and its intensive working of a group of

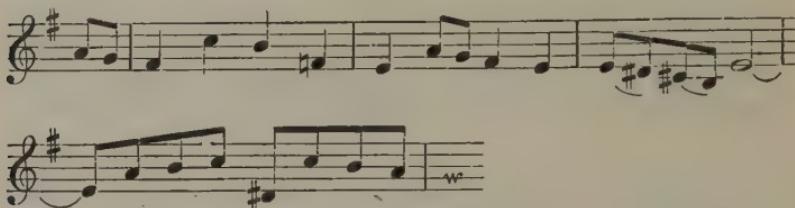
subjects having a good deal in common, this piece calls for no subtleties in registration. It is a tremendous monologue, and too violent or sudden dynamic contrasts destroy its character. The main point is to avoid a continuous piling of heavy tone on music that is already so weighty in itself. A few too many seconds of full organ are likely to make the work oppressive instead of impressive. This Prelude should be heard more frequently as a separate movement. The Fugue is so long that the two pieces can rarely be played together, with the result that as a rule the Fugue is taken and the Prelude left.

Fugue subjects with rocking motion have always been fairly common, *e.g.*, that of the D minor (Toccata), C major (Toccata), and G major (Prelude in 3-2); but the motion is usually oblique. The subject of the E minor Fugue works outwards by contrary motion from a single note to an octave, the result suggesting a wedge, to ear as well as eye :



As the second half is a mere return, by conventional means, to the tonic, the main interest of the subject is harmonic, with the augmented sixth as the chief point. But as Bach knew—what too many modern composers forget—that a harmonic high-light is a poor thing

to lean on, he gives us one of his finest counter-subjects to make up for the theme's melodic weakness :



Pirro goes so far as to say that the subject proper counts for little in this Fugue : "It is a mere pretext for a singularly pathetic counter-subject, which assumes the importance of a symphonic theme freely treated."\* And it is a fact that the subject gives rise to no development, all the free matter in the fugal portion of the work being derived from the counter-subject. At first sight the expression "all the fugal portion" seems absurd when used in connection with a fugue. But this example is far from being a fugue in the accepted sense of the term. What business has a fugue with a long middle section, the irrelevance of which is only accentuated by the halting in of the subject from time to time ? Parry regards this section as a problem, and suggests that Bach began it with the intention of providing some relief from the striking theme, and that, being pleased with the effect of the subject thrown up at intervals against the decorative passages, he developed the idea at greater length than he originally intended. Certainly the proportions of the Fugue are wrong, the opening expository section being only

---

\* "L'Orgue de Jean-Sébastien Bach," p. 104.

fifty-nine bars in length, and the free middle part about a hundred and twenty. As the final portion is an exact repetition of the first, the actual fugal treatment of the subject is barely one-half of the whole work. Parry looks on this *da capo* as a good method of consolidating a movement that had become too loose. But Bach had used the method before, in cases where there was no need for tightening up the music, *i.e.*, the middle-period C minor Fugue (III., 79) and the fine Fugue that forms the *Finale* of the second Trio-sonata.\* (In the latter the repetition is less marked, owing to the two manual voices being transposed.) Clearly Bach felt that although in a normal fugue the interest should be cumulative, mere repetition being therefore ruled out, yet something might be done on the lines of the aria, with its A-B-A construction. Here surely is the explanation of the free middle section. A *da capo*, to be effective, must be preceded by a considerable stretch having little or no connection with the main subject, and it is worth noting that in the three organ fugues wherein Bach has used the device the middle section is unusually free.

It was said above that in these latest works of Bach the preludes seem at times to have a textual as well as a spiritual connection with their fugues. In the case of the E minor pair, we find both equally powerful in a somewhat harsh way, and in both long-spun scale-passages are a prominent feature. The middle section of the Fugue has much of the character of an improvisation, the

---

\* In view of this fact, the note in the preface to the Novello Edition should surely be modified. The *da capo* in the E minor Fugue is *not* “unique among Bach’s organ fugues.”

subject appearing from time to time in a way that suggests the player's saying, "Here it is! I haven't forgotten it, despite my going so far afield." As to registration, the possibilities are too numerous to discuss. The one point that perhaps needs urging is that the first and third sections should not be treated in the same way. Plain diapason tone for the first, and full organ for the third, will modify the effect of the repetition. The middle section gives an opportunity for some fiery use of the full swell. Despite its discursiveness and its unduly large proportion of free matter, this Fugue is a worthy pendant to the Prelude. The two pieces, with their huge design and elemental strength, make up one of the most stupendous things in music.

In the C major Prelude and Fugue (IX.) the atmosphere is one of unbroken serenity. Only at the end of each—note, again, a point in common—does Bach interrupt the genial and thoughtful flow by a series of detached chords, like hasty ejaculations. The Prelude is one of his happiest works, full of the mellow simplicity belonging to wise old age. The harmonic scheme is based chiefly on the common chord, and the liberal use of passages in thirds and sixths gives a pastoral flavour. The other chief constituent is a leaping common-chord figure, delivered usually by the pedals with something of the effect of an *ostinato*. Was this movement written during Christmas or Epiphany-tide? The pastoral idiom suggests it, and there is, moreover, a remarkable similarity between the Prelude and the first chorus of the Epiphany cantata, "The Sages of Sheba shall come." The key is the same, the time nearly so

( $\frac{9}{8}$  and  $\frac{12}{8}$ ), the opening themes have a strong family likeness :

(a)

(b)

and the semiquaver figure :



of which so much use is made in the Prelude appears several times in the Cantata chorus. Its cadential use at the close of the introduction is strongly suggestive of the close of the Prelude :

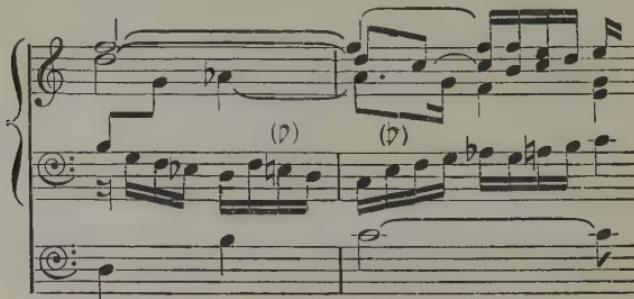
The Cantata was composed in 1724—about ten years before the Prelude. So striking a connection suggests that Bach wrote the organ piece after a later performance of the choral work.

Like many other organ pieces of Bach, the C major Prelude may be played loudly or quietly with equally good effect. The only passages that call for at least a fair amount of power are the detached chords in the last page and the emphatic octaves of the closing bars. But, loud or soft,

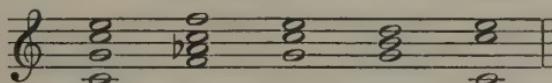
the music demands above all neatness and a full perception of its beautiful springing rhythm.

The Fugue is one of the most closely-knit of all Bach's works. The subject is extraordinarily terse (one bar of 4-4 time is big enough to hold it), but, short as it is, it plays a part in almost every one of the seventy bars that make up the fugue. Perhaps the result of this intensive working is "musician's music"; nevertheless, dull must be the lay ear that is not impressed when the pedals, silent during the first forty-eight bars, come on the scene with an augmented version of the subject. Most composers—perhaps Bach himself in his earlier days—would have been content to give this entry a more or less free background. But Bach, instead of relaxing the tension, increases it by making the three manual parts a *stretto* by inversion. Later he varies the process by giving the pedals two more augmented statements of the subject, this time inverted, accompanied by fragments of the theme right side up. Yet another *stretto* takes place over the tonic pedal at the end. The Fugue is a remarkably fine specimen of a *ricercare*.

A doubtful point in the matter of text is in bars 4 and 5 on page 166:



The Peters edition omits the optional flats; Augener gives the first only. The unsatisfactory effect of the left-hand part (with or without the second of the suggested flats) must be admitted; nor does it improve on acquaintance. Probably the solution is to be found by flattening all the three E's in the left-hand part, in which case the E natural in the right hand comes out with fine, bright effect. Against this we have the fact that the preceding and following bars are manifestly in C major, so that it is almost certain that the E flat got in by mistake. After all, the A flat must not be taken to imply a modulation to C minor. The use side by side of the minor sixth and the major third:



has long been a convention, especially in the final cadences of organ music. In Ex. 7, therefore, we may be sure that there should be either three E flats in the tenor, or none at all—with a strong bias in favour of the latter version. Two interesting melodic features are Bach's favourite "British Grenadiers" cadence at the seventh bar before the end, and the anticipation of the "Meistersinger" Overture by the subject:

This masterly Fugue is best suited by broad playing, with good diapason tone, and an ample pedal organ for the final section.

One likes to think, with Parry, that the B minor Prelude and Fugue (VII., 52) may have been Bach's last work of that type. Certainly his activities in the field of large organ works could not be more fitly closed than by this noble example. No other Prelude approaches the B minor in expressive quality, or surpasses it in beauty of texture and harmony. If we want to see at a glance Bach's development as an organ composer, we cannot do better than compare this movement with the Prelude in A minor that precedes it in Book VII. The latter is quite a good specimen of Bach's preludes, and its alternation of ornamental passages and more solid material is an effective, though conventional, method of leading up to so strict a form as a fugue. There was sound reason in the early organ composers' habit of preparing the hearer for the rigours of a fugue by giving him a few moments of rhapsodical flourishings. What was beyond them—and beyond Bach until his later middle period—was the writing of an introductory movement which should provide contrast to the fugue, without being less well knit or less able to claim consideration for its intrinsic value as music. In the B minor Prelude the ornamentation is profuse, but there is not a bar that does not play an important part in the structure. In the A minor Prelude we may remove several groups of bars without doing more than shortening the piece, or we may exchange some of its material with that of other movements of the type with no loss. Take away a bar of the B minor and the edifice comes to the ground.

The writing for the pedals is of special interest, its melodic passages being suggestive of strings, and its octave leaps during the pedal-point heightening the effect of the chain of discords. This is one of the finest passages over a pedal point in all organ music, because it contains so many elements of interest—melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic:

The movement lends itself to very elaborate registration, though it is hardly less effective with a straightforward scheme. On an organ with plenty of accessories one may well treat it as a piece of chamber music, or as a series of gradually

developed climaxes, always provided that the flow of the music is unbroken.

The Fugue sticks to its text almost as closely as did the C major. Like that fugue it has a very short and simple subject—merely an ornamental version of the series of notes that have served generations of pianists as a five-finger exercise:



The movement falls naturally into three sections—a group of entries, a freer portion for manuals only, and a final section with the interest heightened by some fresh material, including a new counter-subject.

The interest declines a little in the middle portion, but only for a few bars. The last two pages are magnificent. The fresh counter-subject—a kind of frank gesture—adds a pointed rhythmical element at a moment when the long-continued semiquaver motion might have become monotonous. Instead of a *stretto* we have three consecutive statements of the subject by the pedals, walking grandly up the keyboard from F sharp minor, through B minor, to E minor, and opening the way for a final entry by the treble, during which the bass emphatically delivers the new counter-subject.

This threefold pedal statement of the subject is sometimes played in octaves. The method, of course, adds emphasis and increases the rolling splendour of the passage, but it has two defects. It reduces the mounting effect of the bass, because

of the need for dodging down for fresh starts in order to keep the octaves within the compass of the pedal board, and it kills all the fine manual polyphony except the top part. On the whole the passage is best left simple.

The threefold construction of the Fugue suggests a change to Swell or Choir for the middle portion. We may leave the Great with the entry of the subject in the left hand at bar 28, or we may be content with merely reducing the power somewhat, deferring a change of manual until bar 35, where the right hand may go over to Choir with good effect. The left hand should end its passage on the Great, joining the right in the second half of the bar. If this plan be adopted the hands must help one another, thus:

The few bars which follow call for similar careful division between the hands.

The return to the Great may be made earlier than is usual in a three section fugue. An effective plan is to prepare Great 8-ft. and 16-ft. diapasons during this Choir passage, the left hand going over at the third beat of bar 40. The right hand should follow with the entry of the subject at the second half of bar 42. This page, with its fine bass, is better suited by this fairly loud Great treatment

than by the Choir or Swell. The former is pretty sure to be either too bright or too feeble, and the latter can usually give us power only in reed tone. Here we want diapasons. We may add full Swell at bar 49, and bring on the full Great at the introduction of the new counter-subject (bar 59). On powerful organs our Great reeds are best reserved until the last few bars. The three pedal deliveries of the subject in the last page seem to call for a reed, but we must remember that too fiery a specimen is apt to spoil the manual work by drowning the important left-hand part. On the whole, a fine pedal diapason is safer, the pedal reeds being held back until the fourth bar from the end, where the springing counter-subject gives them a fine chance.

Which is the finest of Bach's organ preludes and fugues? Players will differ on the point, but there will be agreement as to the B minor being second to none. From the first note of the Prelude to the cadence of the Fugue is a long flight, but the level of inspiration remains high and steady throughout. Many a popular symphony says less at far greater length. Rarely do we find music for any medium expressing so much with so complete a freedom from rhetoric.

## X.—BACH AND THE TRANSCRIPTION.

Bach was ever an enthusiastic copyist and transcriber of other composers' works, from his boyhood, when he tried his young eyes by copying (on the moonlight nights of six months) a volume of clavier music by Kerl, Pachelbel, &c., to his last days, when his overworked sight failed him entirely. A good deal of such copying was of course unavoidable. Printed music was scarce, and if one wished to add a work to one's library, there was usually no other way than the weary process of manuscript. But Bach seems to have been exceptionally busy in this direction, partly because of his consuming interest in music of all kinds, and also because he evidently found his own invention stimulated by the process.

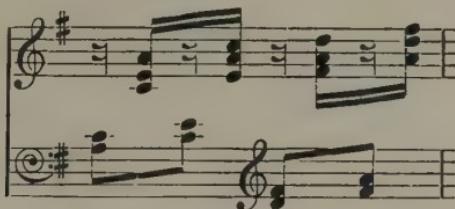
"His contemporary, Magister Pitschel, of Leipsic [says Schweitzer], tells us that before improvising he generally played, from the score, a work by some other man, as if he first had to set the machine of his invention going by artificial means. 'You know,' writes Magister Pitschel to his friend, 'that the famous man who in our town enjoys the greatest reputation for music and the admiration of all connoisseurs, cannot, they say, ravish people with his own combination of tones, until he has played something from a score to set his imagination in motion.'"

The above seems to provide an answer to the question organists frequently ask: "Why did Bach make organ transcriptions of the Vivaldi concertos?" As Schweitzer remarks: "It was not to make them more accessible to the public at large, nor to learn from them, but simply because this was his way and it gave him pleasure."

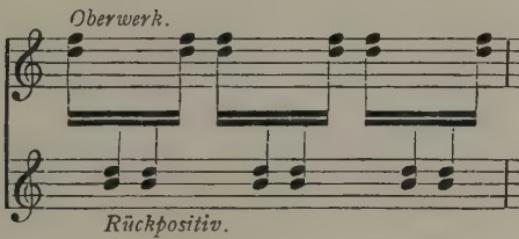
There is not much of musical value in these concertos, but as they are invariably included among Bach's organ works (Book XI.) they cannot well be passed over. First, we have to note that only two of the set are by Vivaldi, Nos. 1 and 4 being by Duke Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar, who died at the age of nineteen. He was evidently a princeling of considerable musical ability, who took his art seriously, being a friend of Bach and a pupil of Walther, the town-organist of Weimar. All four concertos contain an undue amount of complacent padding, wearisome repetition, and passages designed purely for showing-off the player. Their chief interest for us lies in the light they shed on Bach's methods and tastes. They show that as a rule he was far more concerned with the music than with the medium, and that he had no objection to the principle of arrangement. This was natural at a time when the idiom of various instruments was not yet clearly defined. (Only a little earlier our own composers had been producing sets of pieces "apt for viols or voyces." Imagine a work of to-day being written for S.A.T.B. or string quartet!) As to taste, Bach appears to have been far less critical of other men's music than of his own. All was fish that came to his net. He seems to have consumed music (as he

produced it) in a steady stream, and probably the two processes had more connection than is realised.

In these transcriptions Bach employs some keyboard methods used nowhere else in his organ music. In the *Finale* to the first Concerto we have several examples of this chopstick arrangement:



(The movement is marked *Presto*, and is on one manual.) The *Allegro* of No. 2 contains long stretches of broken chords on two manuals, thus



In the same movement there is a good deal of double pedal of an unusually simple type—repeated notes by the right foot at the top of the keyboard, with the left foot stumping out the real bass far below. In the opening movement of No. 4 there are some remarkably rapid and frequent manual changes, often two in a bar of quick 4-4 time, and almost invariably on the second of a group of semiquavers—the best of

answers to those who object to our making similar changes in the D minor Toccata.

At first sight it seems odd that Bach should have transferred these string works to the keyboard with so little modification. No doubt the explanation lies partly in the fact that the transcriptions appear to have been made before he had reached his prime as an organ composer—even before he had written the Eight Short Preludes and Fugues.\* But as we find him, a good many years later, still transferring string passages to the keyboard with little or no attempt to make them suitable for their new medium, we must look beyond mere dates for a reason. It is not difficult to find, but it involves the throwing-over of a popular idea as to the place of the organ in Bach's art. We have been accustomed to believe too readily that the organ was the most influential factor in his life, and that practically the whole of his output shows traces of the idiom of the instrument. But we must not forget that he was probably a proficient violinist at a time when his organ playing was still in a very elementary stage. As Parry says, "It is worth remembering that music of some kind rendered upon the violin was one of his first artistic experiences, as his father had played on a stringed instrument and had taught him the violin when he was a child; and among his duties on his first appointment at Weimar was that of playing in the Duke's band." We have already seen that the Italian school of string composers exercised a marked influence on his organ works during the most important

\* The influence of Vivaldi on certain of the Eight Preludes was pointed out on page 50.

part of his creative life. This influence showed itself not only in the employment of phrasing marks, melodic passages, and basses, of a type suggestive of strings, but even more in a clearness of texture and a finished workmanship rarely found in the organ music of his predecessors and contemporaries.

It may be asked, "Seeing that he was a violin player from childhood, why is there practically no sign of violin influence in his early organ works?" The answer is that the Northern school of violin composers—the only one known to young Bach—consisted chiefly of organists, who used a liberal amount of keyboard idiom when writing for strings. The strong and weak points of the violin were first realised in Italy, and it is a significant fact that Bach's finest organ music period began at a time when his professional work was largely that of a chamber-musician, and when the Italian string composers were becoming well-known in Germany. Thenceforward the string influence is easily traceable in almost every organ work. Even his Leipsic masterpieces, with their return to some of the Buxtehedian methods, contain material more suggestive of strings than of the keyboard—e.g., the arabesque passages in the B minor Prelude, and the springing figure in the C major Prelude. The more we consider the matter, the more clearly we see that if there was one instrument that before all others influenced Bach it was not the organ but the violin. That is why he arranged for clavier no fewer than seventeen string works by Vivaldi and others (in addition to the four for organ), making little or no change of idiom. Schweitzer says: "He tries to get the

effect of the strings on the keyed instruments," showing, "what we can also gather from his works, that for him there was really only one style—that naturally suggested by the phrasing of the stringed instrument—and that all other styles are for him only modifications of this basic style."

Here, surely, is our cue in regard to the interpretation of much of his organ music, especially in the matter of phrasing, and even at times of registration.

If we want further evidence as to Bach's easy-going way of transferring string passages to the keyboard, we shall find it in the set of six Chorale Preludes he arranged in his later years for issue by Schübler, a Zelle publisher (XVI.). It is not easy to understand why, given the rare opportunity for seeing some of his organ works in the glory of print, he should have sent Schübler a set of arrangements, instead of drawing on the numerous chorale preludes at that time in course of revision. Schweitzer thinks these Schübler pieces "do not go particularly well on the organ"—an opinion that will not be endorsed by most organists who have played them. The exquisite prelude on "Sleepers, wake!" would alone be sufficient to make the collection notable, but, as we shall see, its companions are only a little less effective as organ music, though their purely musical appeal sometimes falls a trifle short. Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are drawn from cantatas, a fact which makes it tolerably certain that the origin of No. 2 was similar, and that its source is amongst the lost works.

The original form of the "Sleepers, wake!" piece is a chorus in the cantata of the same title, the

chorale melody being sung by all the tenors, under a long streaming melody on the violins and violas. The pictorial idea is no doubt that of a bridal procession, hinted at in the text. Parry says:

"A highly sympathetic writer on Bach suggests that this singular and delightful passage has the intention of a dance tune; by which is indicated that Bach had in his mind the procession of the betrothed and the joyous attendance of the virgins, whose gestures have a wayward grace which is suggestive of Botticelli. At first the quaintness of the suggestion rather balks acquiescence. But when the extraordinary vivacity of Bach's imagination is taken into account, it may be admitted that among the many things which influenced the product, the idea of the virgins of allegory participating in the welcome of the heavenly Bridegroom may have had a share."

Another view is that the chorale melody represents the warning voice of the Church, and the dance-like counter-theme the unheeding world.

In the organ version Bach gives the vocal part to a solo stop in the tenor register, the string counter-theme to a second manual, and the string bass to the pedals. He omits the filling-in harmonies suggested in the original by the usual figures, the result being a trio. (Knowing his fondness for this method of treating the organ, we are not surprised to find that five of these arrangements are trios for two manuals and pedals.) The "Sleepers, wake!" movement contains a good many examples of Bach's freedom in the matter of passing-notes and discords. Here is a

quotation showing the first two phrases of the chorale melody :

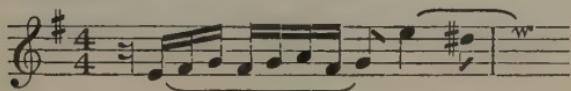
*Ch. & Sw. 8-ft.*

*Gt. 8-ft.*

The music is organized into three staves, each representing a different organ stop or combination. The top staff, labeled "Ch. & Sw. 8-ft.", features a melodic line with various note values and dynamics (mp, mf). The middle staff, also labeled "Ch. & Sw. 8-ft.", provides harmonic support with sustained notes and dynamics (mf). The bottom staff, labeled "Gt. 8-ft.", continues the harmonic support with sustained notes and dynamics (f). The music is divided into three distinct phrases, each starting with a forte dynamic (f) and ending with a half note. The notation includes various note heads, stems, and bar lines, typical of early printed music notation.

In the whole of Bach's chorale arrangements there is nothing more fascinating than the way the counter-theme develops into what Walford Davies truly calls “one of the most spacious tunes in existence.” It is often spoilt, however, by being played so quickly that parts of it become almost trivial. We must beware of giving the string melody to a very telling stop: its character and frequent high pitch ensure sufficient prominence. If the chosen stop is enclosed so much the better.

The second Prelude is a quaint little piece on the Chorale “Wo soll ich fliehin hin?” (“Whither shall I fly?”). The word “fly” seems to have suggested the figure:



which is treated by two manuals (the upper with 8-ft. stops, the lower with 16-ft.—Bach's own directions), while the pedal delivers the chorale melody with a 4-ft. stop, thus providing the alto of the trio. We may well add a soft 8-ft. to the 16-ft. in order to make the lower bass passages clearer. This little piece can be made very piquant, and we may be sure Bach played it quickly. The figure quoted is used as the basis of a longer but less successful prelude on this chorale in Vol. XIX.

The third Prelude is on “Wer nun den lieben Gott” (“If thou but suffer God to guide thee”), and is an arrangement of a duet from the cantata of the same name; the voice-parts and the bass *continuo* are given to the manual, while the chorale,

played in the original by massed strings, is delivered by the pedal with a 4-ft. stop, thus :

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a piano. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. Both staves are in common time (indicated by a 'C'). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The music consists of six measures. Measure 1: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 2: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 3: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 4: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 5: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. Measure 6: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Bass staff has eighth-note pairs. There are several dynamic markings: '4-ft.' in measure 4, 'f' (fortissimo) in measure 5, and '&c.' (and so on) at the end of measure 6.

The result is very effective, whether the movement be played loudly or softly. The former method is suitable only when a powerful 4-ft. reed can be used for the melody, against a diapason background.

No. 4 is a treatment of *Tonus Peregrinus*, and is lifted bodily from the cantata, "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (not the Magnificat, but a hymn based thereon by Joseph Klug). The original version consists of a duet for soprano and tenor, against the *C.F.* played by oboe and

trumpet. In the organ form the voice-parts are played on one manual, the *C.F.* on another, and the *continuo* by the pedals. The fact that in the piece's original form the *C.F.* was delivered by the trumpet justifies loud registration, but on the whole quiet treatment is to be preferred. It is very effective with a soft swell (string tone) for the voice parts and pedal, with a *mf* 16-ft. Great solo stop (uncoupled) for the *C.F.*. The solo stop should be of flute tone—a good Great Double will be suitable. There is something very striking in the opening and closing of the piece by a single bass part. The treatment of this very “stringy” theme:



by the two voices is full of interest. The two bars of F minor following the first phrase of the *C.F.* are unexpected and deeply expressive. Bars 13 and 24 call for a momentary use of the right hand on two manuals at once—a very unusual thing in German organ music of that date, though some of the early French composers seem to have made considerable use of “thumbing.”

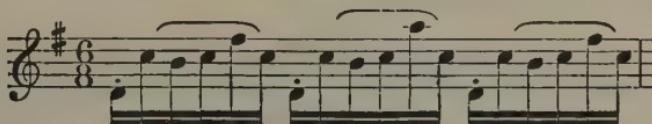
The fourth Prelude, “Ach bleib’ bei uns” (“Abide with us”), is drawn from one of Bach’s most beautiful cantatas—that dealing with the walk to Emmaus. In its original form it is a soprano solo, with obbligato for violoncello *piccolo*, and *continuo*. Bach shortens it in the organ arrangement, giving the vocal solo to the right hand and the elaborate violoncello part to the left, the pedals of course playing the *continuo*. The piece seems unpromising on first acquaintance,

but the frank and genial obbligato eventually takes one captive. Here is an extract:

The musical score consists of three staves of organ music. The top staff is for the manual, the middle staff for the manual, and the bottom staff for the pedals. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 96.$ . The music features various note values including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The bassoon part (pedals) includes several grace note figures. The score concludes with the instruction "&c."

This curiously attractive piece is an excellent study for left hand and pedals.

The last Prelude of the set is the least successful. It is a transcription of an alto solo in the cantata "Lobe den Herrn," the voice-part being played by the pedals (4-ft.), while two manuals share the elaborate violin solo and *continuo*. The violin solo is awkward for the keyboard, and not very effective, containing as it does a good deal of this kind of thing :



The chief drawback to the piece is its length : the intervals between the appearance of the chorale phrases are long, and we get tired of the rather fussy violin solo.

In addition to their very considerable claims as music, special interest attaches to these Schübler Preludes. They were amongst the last of Bach's works, and the cantatas from which they were taken also date from his Leipsic days. In their lightness of texture (as we have noted, five are trios), as well as in the somewhat secular character of a good deal of their thematic material, they have a decided flavour of chamber music. Although, on the whole, they show us Bach neither plumbing the depths nor scaling the heights, they are too good to be shelved. They are first-rate studies in phrasing, and their value as exercises in the melodic use of the pedal is obvious. Moreover, they serve to remind us, first, that Bach had a liking for making organ transcriptions, and, second, that when he did such arranging, the very few changes he made were almost always in the

direction of simplification—a point worth noting by some modern arrangers.

The freest of Bach's organ transcriptions is the Fugue in D minor (IX., 151) originally composed for violin solo. Seeing that so much of it is clearly in the idiom of the violin, we are surprised to find that some authorities long held the view that the transcription was from keyboard to strings. Griepenkerl says :

"It is remarkable that the Fugue was likewise arranged for the violin by Bach himself. It is found in this form in the first of the well-known six Sonatas for violin alone, and is transposed into G minor, as it could not be played on the violin in D minor. . . . All passages were altered which were not applicable for the violin."

But is it conceivable that Bach, at a time when he had almost reached his prime as a composer, should have written an organ fugue in which the subject is frequently accompanied by mere detached chords instead of by counterpoints ? The first dozen bars are enough to prove that the Fugue was originally written for violin solo.

In making the arrangement Bach seems to have been very capricious, leaving some passages in a comparatively ineffective form from a keyboard point of view, and richly amplifying others. Thus, he was content to support the long, single-voice passage of the original in bars 7-10 by quaver chords, while elsewhere he adds new and melodious counterpoints, the result being a good deal more than a mere arrangement. Readers who have at hand the Violin Sonatas or the Peters edition of the organ works (in which the violin form is given

"FIDDLE" FUGUE IN D MINOR 261

as a variant) will do well to compare the two versions. For the benefit of those who cannot make such comparison, I append two of the most striking passages:

VIOLIN.

ORGAN.

Violin.

(b)

ORGAN.

These extracts are typical of the charm of the Fugue as a whole. It has a slender character and a lyric expressiveness that make it an excellent fugue for propaganda purposes. People who dismiss the form as dry and mechanical usually succumb to this specimen, because it has qualities that are often lacking in finer and bigger fugues—tunefulness and sentiment. The Prelude is comparatively unimportant. It appears to be a little clavichord piece transferred bodily to the organ manuals.

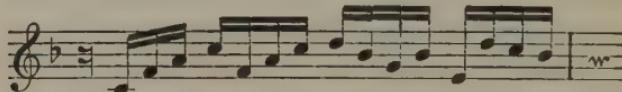
## XI.—THE EIGHTEEN CHORALE PRELUDES.

Collected and revised (and in some cases composed) during the last years of Bach's life, the Eighteen Chorale Preludes (XVII.) show this side of his art at its best. True, the set as a whole is less intimate and poetic than the Little Organ Book. On the other hand, it is almost entirely free from the austerity—not to say aridity—that marks a proportion of the Catechism Preludes. The chief characteristics of The Eighteen are pure musical beauty, and workmanship as nearly flawless as we have a right to expect from a mere human.

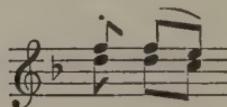
Six forms of prelude are represented. There are three trios, five coloratura treatments, three pieces with vigorous manual writing over the chorale in the bass, three in the style of Pachelbel, three descriptive movements, and one example of the melodic use of the pedal with a 4-ft. stop. This classification is necessarily rough, for some of the pieces show the characteristics of several types. For example, the second of the three Preludes on "Nun komm', der Heiden Heiland" (p. 49) is both a trio and an example of coloratura treatment. Again, the second of the two long pieces on "Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott" (p. 10), combines the florid and the Pachelbel

methods. Other less obvious overlappings will discover themselves to the observant player. Indeed, much of the supreme excellence of the collection lies in this free manipulation of a few forms that in the hands of Bach's predecessors (and occasionally even of Bach himself) were liable to become stiff and dry.

This easy mastery is well shown in the great Fantasia on "Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott" ("Come, Holy Ghost, Lord God"), with which the set opens. Over a tonic pedal, Bach launches out into a movement strongly suggestive of a toccata. At the eighth bar the pedal walks up to the dominant and proceeds to deliver the chorale melody. This remains its function throughout, the manuals meanwhile being engaged in animated discussion of the opening subject :



A little leaning figure of three notes :



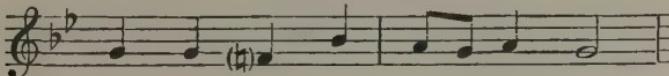
and a brief series of shakes introduced towards the end, are the only other constituents. Thus practically the whole of this long movement—over a hundred bars—is developed from Ex. I over the somewhat unenterprising bass provided by the chorale. This splendid piece should be played at a good pace—a trifle faster than the  $\text{♩}=76$  suggested—and with plenty of tone. From bar 9

onwards, the bigger the pedal the better. The chorale phrases enter at fairly long intervals, and they should come on the scene with a tread that shakes the aisle. The Great reeds should be reserved until the final page. The manual power may well be reduced in one or two passages between the pedal entries where the music becomes lighter in texture. A good many pieces of Bach, especially among the chorale preludes, are equally effective with loud or soft registration. Not so this Fantasia. Like the “Wedge” Prelude, the F major Toccata, the great C minor Prelude, and a few other works, it calls for an organ of big scale—indeed, the pieces just named almost depend upon tonal splendour for their effect. The Fantasia is a perfect voluntary for a big occasion, and at the right pace it is a fine study in part-playing. Played the merest trifle on the slow side, or with tame registration, we become aware that it is very long.

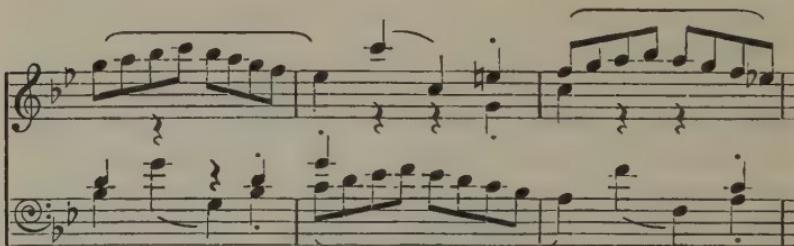
Perhaps the third Prelude on “Nun komm’, der Heiden Heiland” (“Come, Saviour of the Gentiles”) (p. 52), is an even more successful example of this method of treating a chorale. For one thing, it is shorter and more compact, and the chorale melody makes a better bass. The movement is a free fugue on this subject :



an ornamentation of the opening phrase of the tune :



It is difficult to overpraise the vigour and animation of the polyphony. Note the delightful dialogue in the episodical portions :



the germ of which is seen in the counter-subject in bar 5 :



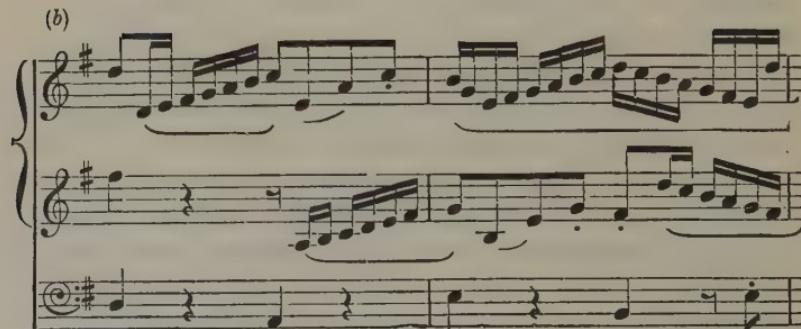
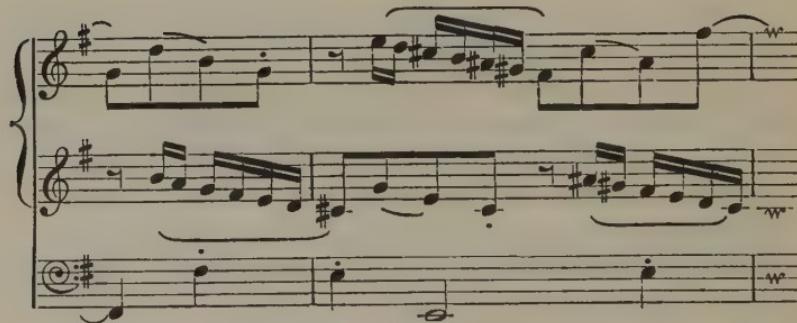
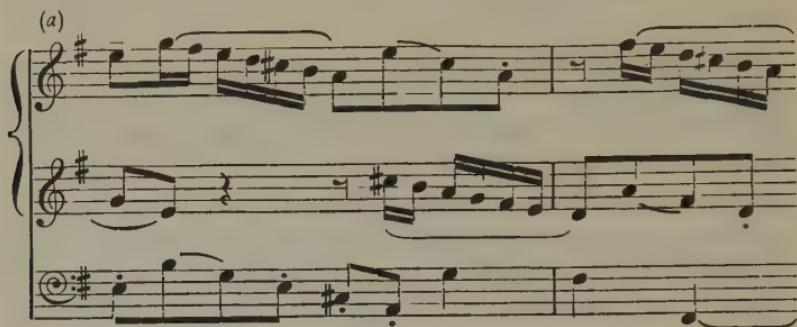
Observe, too, how skilfully Bach solves the problem presented by movements in this form—how to obtain both unity and variety in the manual texture over a bass that must be made prominent, and that enters in short phrases at long intervals. He ensures unity by the fugal working, variety by first-rate episodes and by inversion of the subject. The inversion is first used over the second phrase

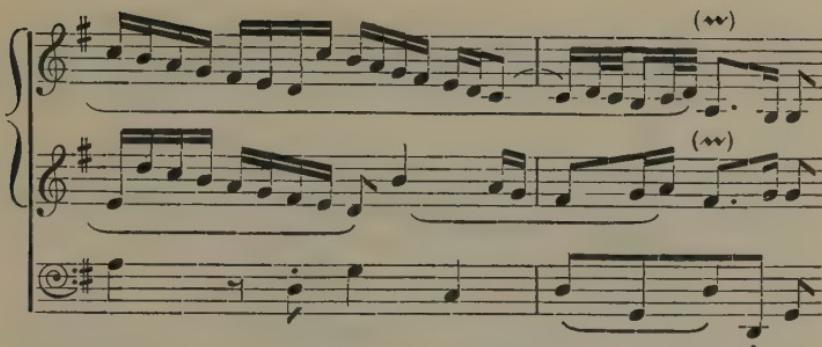
of the chorale melody, where the music takes a welcome spell in the relative major. Over the final phrase we have a fine *stretto* by inversion, with yet another over the tonic pedal, both so natural that they may easily escape notice. This piece is marked "In Organo pleno," and clearly calls for full manual power (without Great reeds), and as telling a pedal as we can provide. Indeed, we may take it as a pretty safe rule that vigorous pieces of this type with the melody in the bass should be regarded as tremendous bass solos against a polyphonic background that should be solid or brilliant according to the mood of the music.

The third example of this treatment is less successful, though it is an effective piece. It is an expansion of the "Little Organ Book" prelude on "Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist" ("Come, O Creator Spirit, blest"), the melody of which is a form of the plainsong "Veni Creator." In the early treatment Bach put the melody in the treble; here he tacks on a section with the tune in the bass under florid manual parts. Both halves are good, but they differ so markedly in style that they do not make an entirely satisfactory whole, though the combination is neatly managed by a bridge-passage which leads us gradually from the somewhat stolid first section to the florid second.

Two of the trios are in the style of the quick movements of the trio-sonatas. That on "Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend" ("Lord Jesu Christ, turn Thou to us") is one of Bach's most engaging movements. Its tunefulness and polish, and the genial—almost humorous—interplay of parts ought to make it a popular recital piece. It

is as happy as a ring of bells—the simile is suggested by such chiming passages as :





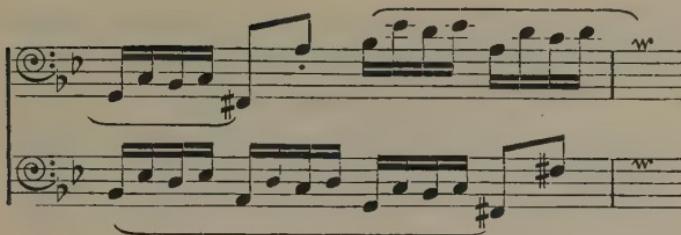
The main theme is based on the first phrase of the chorale, which is not otherwise referred to until the end, when Bach introduces it on the pedals.

Bach seems to have had no aim here beyond turning out a delightful piece of music. In fact, these later preludes as a whole show very few attempts at programme music save in a general way. In “The Little Organ Book” Bach seizes on a word or phrase; here he is usually content to express the general mood of the hymn, or, as in this case, to take a fragment of the tune, and from it evolve a piece of abstract music. His head must have been full of themes suggested by fragments of chorales, and we may easily imagine him working out the more promising or insistent of them as studies or pieces, regardless of the text with which they were associated.

Equally happy, though perhaps a little less striking in some of its material, is the long Trio—eight pages—on “Allein Gott in der Höh’ sei Ehr” (“Glory be to God on high”) (page 66). The reference to the chorale melody is slight—the theme is based on its opening notes, and the pedals

introduce its first and second phrases at the end. There is some charming writing of the "stringy" type, and the piece is a fine study. How much this species depends upon phrasing is shown by such passages as :

The remaining Trio—on "Nun komm', der Heiden Heiland" (p. 49)—is one of the most curious of all the chorale preludes. What did Bach mean by the sombre duet which serves as background to the floreated chorale melody?



The diminished fourth of the theme, the numerous clashes, the falling sevenths, and the consistent use of the lower part of the keyboards, combine to make the piece so dark in mood as to be repellent on first acquaintance. One ends, however, by enjoying its asperities. As a study for left hand and feet its value is obvious. It is so little like organ music at times that we wonder if it is an arrangement of the Schübler kind. Is it an instrumental movement from one of the lost cantatas?

The five coloratura preludes form a group of which it is difficult to write without seeming to indulge in hyperbole. The best known (but not quite the best, I think), “Schmücke dich” (“Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness”) (p. 22), has probably called forth more rhapsodical comment than any other organ work of Bach. Schumann’s little pæan is too well known to call for quotation. Pirro muses thus for two pages of his “L’Orgue de Jean-Sébastien Bach”:

“‘Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele!’ orne-toi, ô chère âme! Et Jean-Sébastien prend une phrase du très calme et trop austère choral: cette bûre un peu sévère, il la pare sous des ornements simples et suaves comme des lis qui vivraient sur un autel uniforme et nu . . . et c’est ainsi qu’un

prêtre habile et saint dit des paroles qui charment en sanctifiant, et que ses mains ne restent pas croisées sur sa poitrine, mais que son geste monte vers Dieu, à peine attristé d'un éloignement qui bientôt cessera . . . la vertu est une chose joyeuse !

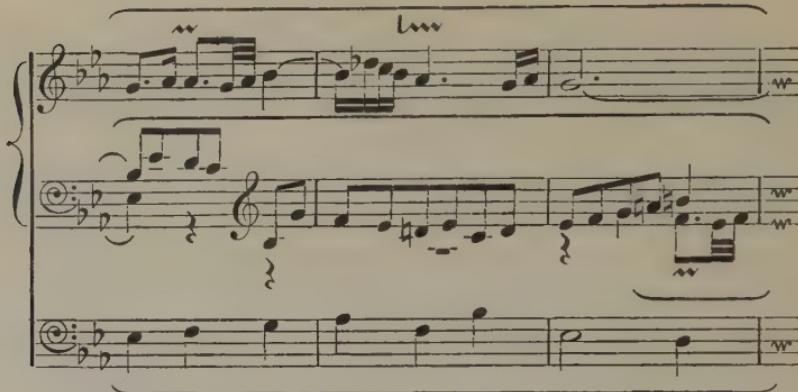
“‘Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele!’ orne-toi, ô chère âme ! Et voici que, tout à coup, sur un très lointain clavier, le cantique calme et moins austère se fait entendre : ces voix vont-elles vers Dieu, ou si c'est du ciel qu'elles appellent ? est-ce une prière qui monte, ou la rosée d'une grâce qui pleut doucement ? . . . Et les ornements suaves d'une simple mélodie vivent ainsi que des lis et ne respirent nulle tristesse, car la vertu est belle et joyeuse. . . . ‘Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele !’ orne-toi, ô chère âme ! . . .”

We may subscribe to all this, however little we may feel disposed to hold forth in similar strain. “Schmücke dich,” once thoroughly assimilated, never fails to throw a kind of spell over us. Mysticism in music is one of the most rare and elusive of qualities. We feel it in certain works or passages, but cannot often ascribe it to given progressions. The musical material for the more straightforward emotional states is so well-known as to have become almost a recipe. Love, hate, joy, sorrow—give any average clever student an orchestra to play with, and he will run the gamut of these emotions, with sub-sections, in a very few minutes. But only a handful of composers—a

Bach, a Franck, or an Elgar—can give us mysticism, and even they achieve it so rarely that the effect seems almost fortuitous. “Schmücke dich” has it, unmistakably.

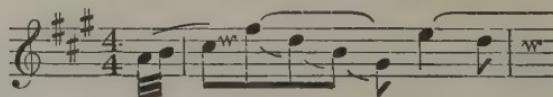
Had Bach written this Prelude in his early period he would probably have seized on the word “Schmücke,” and spun a long-drawn florid melodic thread with simple harmonic support. As it is, he gives us something far more subtle—a modest ornamentation of the chorale with, for background, a beautifully-woven three-part texture based on the chorale. The effect is not so much that of a tune elaborated as of one garlanded by the attendant parts. The registration that most clearly brings this out is that suggested in the Novello edition—an 8-ft. solo stop for the melody, with 8-ft. and 4-ft. for the accompanying manual. The 4-ft. stop should be soft: a cutting tone, such as that of the Principal, will ruin the movement. With a 4-ft. stop of the right power and quality the accompaniment will float *round* the melody, whereas an 8-ft. will keep it usually below. Here is a quotation showing the opening phrase of the chorale:

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff shows the soprano line, which begins with a dotted half note followed by a dotted quarter note. The middle staff shows the bass line, featuring eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff shows the alto line, also with eighth-note patterns. The music is set in common time, with a key signature of one flat. Measures are separated by vertical bar lines, and the notes are indicated by stems and heads.



There is no need to detail the beauties of this movement, but I cannot refrain from drawing the reader's attention to the D flat in the alto at the beginning of the last line of p. 23, and the final cadence. The pace should not be slow. The text gives us the cue: a kind of rapturous meditation. If we forget to play some of the ornaments we shall do the movement good rather than harm.

Somewhat similar in mood and method is the first Prelude on "Allein Gott" (p. 56). The background is no less subtle, and the coloratura is more elaborate. Ornaments are lavishly used, and many of them are integral parts of the thematic material, and so cannot be omitted. Indeed, none of us will want to omit the delightful "slide" and appoggiaturas of the main subject:



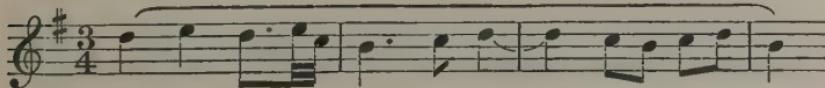
played:



It is a pity these ornaments are not written in full throughout: they are difficult to fit in from the signs alone when they occur in the middle voice of a complex passage. There is no definite expressive quality about this Prelude. It is just a beautiful and melodious piece of polyphony.

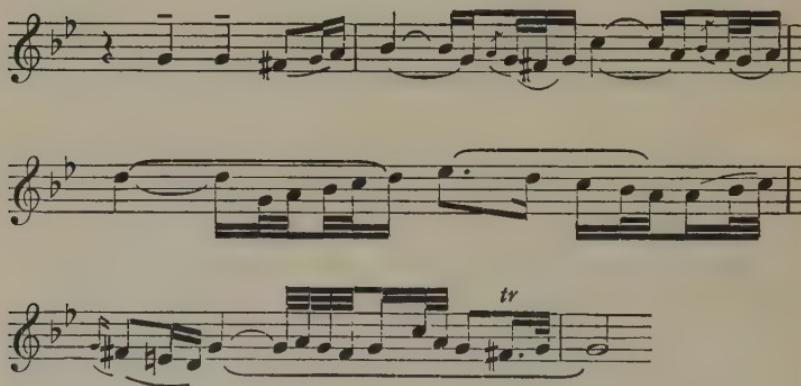
Much the same may be said of the movement on the same chorale which follows it. The florid version of the chorale melody is played in the tenor part of the keyboard, but the mood of the piece is kept bright by the delightfully tuneful treble and alto, which lie rather high. The mood darkens for a moment where the tenor part becomes chromatic and rhapsodical, followed by a bar marked *adagio*, otherwise the music is grace itself, despite its abundance of imitative and canonic writing.

Another example with the melody in the tenor is the Prelude on "An Wasserflüssen Babylon" ("By the Waters of Babylon") (p. 18). The decoration is slight, and, as in "Schmücke dich," it is fairly equally shared by all three manual parts. An unusual feature is the almost continuous use for accompanimental purposes of the opening two phrases of the chorale, especially the first, which becomes a kind of *ostinato*. In a plain form it appears even in the bass (bars 4-7 and 15-18, and again in the last line). It is a beautiful theme:



and its insistence, combined with the 'cello-like tenor solo, results in one of Bach's most expressive pieces.

For real poignancy, however, we must go to the first Prelude on "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" (p. 46). Here Bach throws himself into the long-drawn melodic elaboration of one of the simplest of chorales, though the accompaniment, especially the bass, is full of character, and not least when it subsides into fragmentary motives—expressive little gestures rather than themes. It is a simple matter to elaborate a hymn-tune—not so simple to evolve such a theme as this :

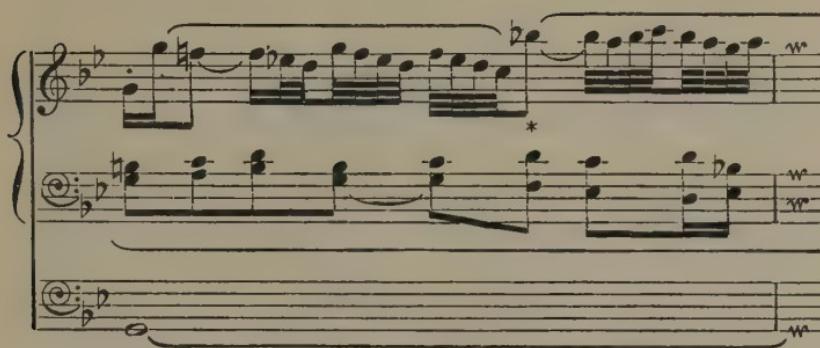


from so bald a series of notes as :



The *Coda* over the tonic pedal a few bars before the end is something to linger over, especially the

startling B flat at \*, and the consecutive 6-4 chords :



Which of Bach's chorale preludes is the most beautiful? “Schmücke dich”? “Herzlich thut mich verlangen”? “An Wasserflüssen Babylon”? The writer may be allowed to say that some years ago his choice fell on this “Nun komm’” prelude, and has stayed there ever since.

If it wavered, it would probably be in the direction of the exquisite piece on “Von Gott will ich nicht lassen” (“From God naught shall divide me”) (p. 43). Here the melody is played by the pedals with a 4-ft. stop, surrounded by arabesques evolved from it. The expressive effect is heightened at the close by the use of the last note of the melody as a pedal point (inverted, of course, owing to the 4-ft. pitch of the pedal stop), with a persistently throbbing alto part and an octave-falling bass.

The great setting of “O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig” (p. 32) is one of Bach's most elaborate pieces of programme music. The text is a metrical version of the “Agnus Dei.” Bach devotes a section to each verse, the result being

very long (perhaps too long) and somewhat straggling, despite the constant presence of the chorale as a unifying element. Sections 1 and 2 are in three-part harmony for manuals, with the theme in the treble and alto respectively. The writing is fluent, and the springing figure in verse 2 is effective, but as a whole the result is somewhat dry, chiefly because the theme does not stand out, especially when it is the alto. Soloing is impossible in both cases. The finest part is the opening of verse 3, where the chorale is given to the pedal, under three-part imitative treatment of a flowing theme. Note that there should be no change of pace here, three crotchets equalling four quavers of the preceding movement. Half-way through this verse Bach breaks off and introduces a fresh manual figure, the chorale being resumed a few bars later. We find still more new material when the text makes a reference to the Passion. Here Bach introduces the chromatic scale with which he usually treats such references. The *Coda*, with its diatonic scales, evidently refers to the flight of angels—the heralds of peace—suggested by the prayer for peace with which the third verse ends. It will be seen from this brief description that there are no fewer than six strongly-differentiated motives employed. As, once superseded, they are referred to no more, the effect is distinctly scrappy. The fact is, of course, a long piece in which the descriptive treatment is particular rather than general is bound to fail on the structural side unless the text admits of recapitulation, or unless the themes have something in common, or grow out of one another almost imperceptibly.

This last method of solving the problem is employed in the splendidly sombre Prelude on "Jesus Christus, unser Heiland" ("Jesus Christ, our Redeemer") (p. 74). The chorale is present throughout, more or less prominently exposed; four descriptive motives are used—the dragging syncopated one representing the carrying of the Cross (the semiquaver subject of the opening section), a theme which Schweitzer suggests is representative of flagellations (first appearing in the bass of bar 4, p. 75); the chromatic scale representing the Passion, and a figure typical of the Resurrection (bar 5, p. 77).

The reader will have no difficulty in seeing their suitability to the four lines of the first verse of the hymn :

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour,  
Who freed us from the wrath of God,  
By His death and anguish sore,  
Redeemed us from the pains of Hell.

The themes are introduced so naturally, and there is so little change of feeling until the fourth section, that we feel no lack of unity. The treatment of the chromatic scale is perhaps the finest feature of the Prelude. It is used with growing intensity, until its final appearance in four parts, moving in pairs by contrary motion over a pedal-point.

There are several effective ways of registering this Prelude. Perhaps the most satisfying, as well as the simplest, is to begin *mp* or *mf*, gradually increasing the power at each section (still keeping the colour dark) until the close of the chromatic scale-passage, which should be *ff* or at least *f*. The final section should be played full organ,

reserving the Great reeds till the final bar. This method admits of no soloing. The pace should be slow at the opening, but a very gradual quickening seems to be called for from the third page to the end.

The other piece on this chorale is much simpler, but no less beautiful. It is for manuals only until the close, at which point a tonic pedal appears. The only attempt at definite description seems to be at the *Coda*, where the rising arpeggio and the increased animation of the manual parts evidently refer to the Resurrection.

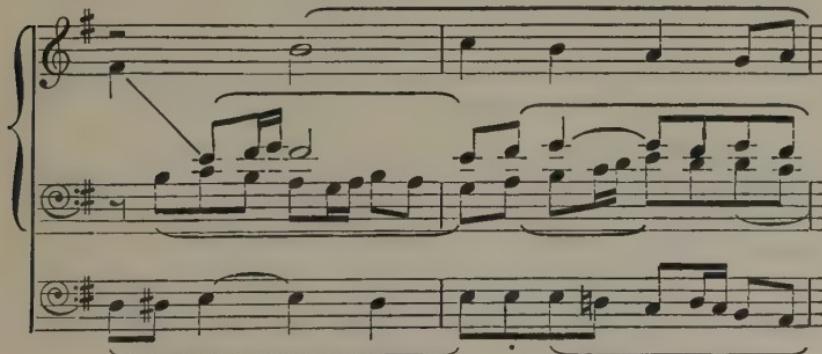
We have already seen that the Pachelbel form of prelude led to loose and sprawling results when employed for a long chorale. A good example of this is seen in the Prelude on "Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott" ("Come, Holy Ghost, Lord God") (p. 10). It runs to about two hundred bars, and although it contains much beautiful music, we soon grow weary of the constant pulling-up and the starting of fresh fugal expositions. It is overloaded with ornament, too. Perhaps this is an early work which Bach touched up in his last years, improving the details, but being unable to overcome the inherent drawbacks of the form.

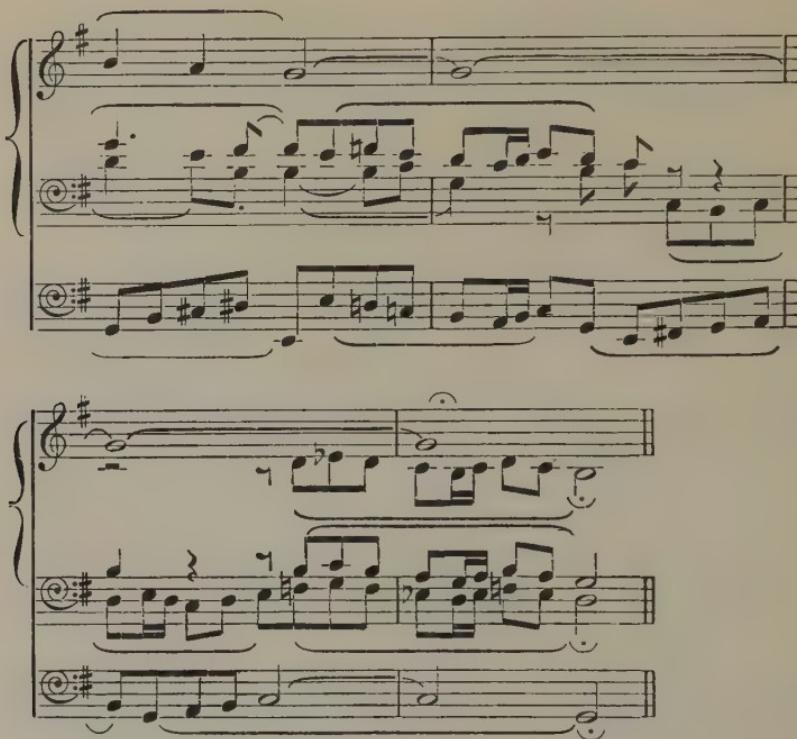
A much better example is the sturdy piece on "Nun danket alle Gott" ("Now thank we all our God") (p. 40). The Pachelbel method is carried out strictly, but the polyphony is so animated and interesting, and the whole fabric so well-knit, that the considerable length of the chorale matters little, if at all. This is an excellent voluntary for festival occasions, because the tune set to its proper text is familiar in our churches. The music is easily followed, too, the melody standing out boldly, and being free from confusing ornament.

It should be played on a powerful reed, against a solid background of diapason tone.

A perfect example of the Pachelbel form is the Prelude with which the volume ends. The circumstances in which it was written are so familiar that there is little need to recapitulate them, but for the sake of completeness they must be set down.

Worn out at last, Bach lay on his death-bed. A stroke had left him helpless, and his overworked sight was nearly gone. But composition was to him almost as natural a function as breathing. Blind and helpless as he was, habit still triumphed; he dictated to his son-in-law, Altnikol, the completion of a Prelude on “*Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein*” (“When we are in deepest need”), changing the title to that of another hymn to which the tune was sung—“*Vor deinen Thron tret’ ich allhier*” (“Before Thy Throne I come”). There is no hint of failing powers in the music, which is full of placid charm, although packed close with such devices as imitation by inversion and augmentation. The final cadence is of great beauty—the last phrase of the chorale, diminished, in a string of 6-4 chords. Here are the closing bars:





Fifty years before, a boy at Lüneburg, Bach had begun as a composer by writing chorale variations. Throughout his long career the chorale had been a never-failing source of inspiration. He could not have rounded-off his life more fittingly than by thus choosing for his *Nunc dimittis* the medium that, above all, had served him for the expression of his most intimate feelings.

## XII.—REGISTRATION.

The modern player of Bach's string or clavier music has a straightforward task compared with that of the organist. The pianist may feel that the tone of his instrument is not quite what he would choose for the ideal performance of certain Suites, but as the clavichord is obsolete, he has only to go ahead and regard the works as pianoforte music. String tone now is pretty much what it always was, so the fiddler can play his Bach without worrying as to whether the result is like that obtained by the composer. But the modern organist has at his easy disposal a wealth and variety of tone that make the organ of to-day and that of Bach's time different instruments.

At first sight it would appear that the modern organ, with its power, variety, and facilities for rapid registration, would be a fine medium for Bach, but as a matter of fact these developments count for less than we might expect. The most powerful stops can rarely be used with good effect in complex polyphonic passages, and rapid registration is of little advantage because so much of the music makes its effect by continuity. Frequent changes of colour or power more often than not merely break the flow. Even the climaxes are to a considerable extent in the music itself, and need little in the way of additional tone. Indeed, where they result from an increased closeness of texture they may easily be spoilt by mere

power. Rather will they be helped by a very gradual change of pace, though whether this should be a quickening or a slackening must be decided by the character or mood of the music.

Schweitzer roundly condemns the modern organ as a medium for Bach :

“ Our registers are all voiced too loudly or too softly. If we pull out the whole of the diapasons and the mixtures, or add the reeds, we get a force of tone that in the end becomes positively unbearable. The lighter manuals are weak in comparison with the Great organ ; they usually lack the necessary mixtures. Our pedals are coarse and clumsy and also poor in mixtures, as well as in 4-ft. stops. The trouble comes principally from the change in the disposition of the organs, the relations between diapasons and mixtures having been altered, wholly to the detriment of the latter ; but also from the unnaturally strong bellows of the modern organ. In our passion for strength we have forgotten beauty and richness of tone, which depend upon the harmonious blending of ideally voiced stops.”

Few of us will go the whole way with Schweitzer. Many—perhaps most—modern organs are too powerful for the needs of the buildings in which they are placed, but they contain stops more beautiful than any Bach ever heard, and, so far as mechanics can aid interpretation, they are likely to lead to better Bach playing than any organ Silbermann put together. Nor need the immense resources at our disposal be a hindrance so long as we remind ourselves of the connection between Bach’s organ music and the instrument on which he played it.

The composer of to-day writes music for other people to perform, which is perhaps one reason why a good deal of its effect never leaves the printed page. As hardly any of Bach's organ music was published in his lifetime, its performance was confined to himself and a handful of his pupils and friends. We know that his instinct for effect was almost uncanny, and so we have the most practical of reasons for being sure that the character of his organ music was largely determined by the strong and weak points of the instruments of his day. Thus he wrote practically all his organ music in a continuous style, giving few opportunities for changes of stop, and (in the fugues) scarcely a chance of soloing a part, for the good reason that such things could not be done. Again, the full organ of his time was a mild affair compared with that of ours. He could safely write a long piece of four-part polyphony in semiquavers, because he knew that even with all the stops drawn the result would be clear. His pedal department was independent, bright, and telling—his Leipsic organ had a pedal of sixteen stops, against three manuals of twelve, twelve, and fourteen respectively, and of these sixteen stops three were of 8-ft., two of 4-ft., one of 2-ft., one of 1-ft., and four were Mixtures. Of the thirty-six manual stops only two were of 16-ft. A study of the specifications of Bach's organs at Arnstadt, Weimar, and Leipsic is calculated to make us reserve our more heavily-winded stops (especially reeds) for closes and occasional climaxes, or for chordal passages. Probably Bach's organs were on the shrill side, but they were well adapted for playing polyphonic music. We may revel at times in our wealth of

tone, but we must not do so at the expense of the clearness on which Bach counted when writing.

Suggestions for the registration of individual works have been made in the preceding chapters, but it may be convenient to summarise them into general principles.

A moment's reflection will show us that, as a rule, the stricter the form the less scope there is for varied registration. For this reason the fugues, above all, call for discretion in the players of to-day. Modern music, especially that for orchestra, is so full of variety and colour, that the organist is naturally inclined to show that he, too, can be kaleidoscopic. This is all to the good, so long as he remembers that a shifting colour scheme is not generally necessary to musical salvation. A string quartet, a pianoforte solo, and an *a cappella* chorus—here are three mediums that can do no more than give shadings of one tone-colour, but which none the less have in their repertory a fair share of the great things in music. And organists who fear that the finest of Bach's organ fugues are tolerable to the lay ear only when served up with elaborate registration, forget that most of these same fugues have long been popular in pianoforte transcriptions—a form which not only limits them to one colour, but also robs them of the splendid sonority and *sostenuto* of their original medium.

Elaborate registration of these works, then, is not merely unnecessary. It is opposed to the spirit of a form whose chief characteristics are continuity and consistency, and whose beauty lies largely in its texture. Any registration that breaks up the flow of the music is bad.

Almost as much out of place is the obtrusion of the subject by means of a solo stop. It can rarely be managed without some modification of the polyphony, or without a hitch—sometimes both. Moreover, it is out of place, because for the time being it changes what should be a polyphonic tissue into a melody and accompaniment. If indulged in throughout a fugue, it turns the work into an *ostinato*. It may be argued that in an orchestral fugue the subject would, as a rule, be made to stand out by means of the instrumentation. But this would usually be managed by a quietening of the other parts, or by a slight addition to the tone, through the bringing on of a group of woodwind, or even a single instrument; the character of the movement would be scarcely affected. On the very few occasions when soloing an entry is advisable, the device should be used only for a middle voice, and the result should not be so aggressive as to kill the other parts. A fugue is a discussion between friends, not a contest in talking one another down. There is less objection to the use of a powerful pedal stop when the subject occurs in the bass, because it can be managed without a break, is of splendid effect, and (from its position) is likely to detract little from the remaining parts. Even so, however, a powerful pedal reed is best reserved for the final bass entry of the subject, and in any case is more suitable for slow subjects than for quick.

As was said above, there can be no doubt that many of the best of Bach's organ fugues owe their splendid unity and continuity to the fact that stop-changing during the progress of a movement was practically impossible. Bach undoubtedly

remained on the Great in movements in which the pedal is used fairly constantly, and we shall do well to follow his example. Thus the Alla Breve, the Canzona, the fugues in A major and C major (III., 72), the "short" B minor and G minor fugues, and a few other examples seem best suited to one manual throughout, as they have no clearly defined middle section. They are all of moderate length, and derive a special kind of unity from the closeness with which they stick to the subject. On the other hand, the long works in A minor, B minor, C minor, E minor, D minor (Doric), and F major are in three well-defined sections: (1) a strong opening movement with pedals, (2) an intermezzo for manual only, and (3) a final portion corresponding to the first. The middle section is invariably light in texture, the writing being usually in three parts. There seems to be no doubt that Bach played such passages on a second manual, resting the pedals partly for the sake of contrast, but probably even more because the couplers had to be worked by hand. (That Bach did not object to a continuous pedal part on the score of monotony is shown by the Toccata in F, the Prelude to the "Wedge," the *Grave* of the Fantasia in G, and some of the long Chorale Preludes.) There is room for difference of opinion as to the exact points at which we should make such manual changes. Any plan that does not break the flow or do violence to the phrasing is good. Frequently it will be effective to let one hand precede the other by a measure or two.

It is evident that the middle section cannot make its full effect unless the preceding portion is played with a good body of tone. This shows the

unsoundness of beginning such fugues with delicate stops. As Schweitzer says, "It is painful to hear themes that should enter proudly, like those of the A minor or G minor fugues, given out softly on a third manual in a way that quite obscures their real character." Still worse is the idea of some German editors (Reger among others) that fugues should begin *p p*—even *p p p*—and gradually work up to a *fortissimo* ending. The plan may be effective in the case of a fugue written specially with a view to a long, gradual *crescendo*, as is the case with some examples by Reger himself. Applied, however, to most of Bach's fugues, it fails because it is apt to give us a growth of tonal intensity at points where the music itself requires a reduction. The only long fugue that seems to ask for a steady *crescendo* treatment is the five-voice work in C major, but even here the dignified character of the music suffers from delicate registration. It should begin at least *mf*. The more one considers this question, the more one sees that any registration scheme that obscures the simple architectural construction of the fugues is bad, however effective it may be in itself. A few years ago there was a reaction from the traditional, stodgy German way of playing fugues *ff* throughout, and players and editors went to the other extreme, aided by the stop-changing facilities of the modern organ. We are now beginning to see that, as a rule, a fugue suffers less from under-registration than from over-registration.

Two fugues that are perhaps best with quiet registration throughout are the A major and the D minor (the "fiddle" fugue).

The Chorale Preludes give many opportunities for the effective use of solo stops. We need not be afraid of an occasional bizarre effect in registering the more picturesque movements. Bach, we know from Forkel, was very daring in this respect:

"His registration frequently astonished organists and organ-builders, who ridiculed it at first, but were obliged in the end to admit its admirable results, and to confess that the organ gained in richness and sonority. Bach's peculiar registration was based on an intimate knowledge of organ-building, and of the properties of each individual stop. Very early in his career he made a point of giving to each part of the organ the utterance best suited to its qualities, and this led him to seek unusual combinations of stops which otherwise would not have occurred to him."\*

His registration of the Prelude on "Ein' feste Burg" has already been alluded to. It is a pity so few other indications of the kind have been preserved. We know enough, however, to convince us that though we must be simple in dealing with the Fugues, we may profitably experiment with the Chorale Preludes. Too many players are satisfied with solo stops and accompaniments of tame and conventional character — partly, no doubt, because they have heard so much about the necessity for playing Bach with dignity and restraint. But many of the Chorale Preludes are anything but restrained in emotion, and some are frankly lighthearted—even skittish. Not Beethoven himself was more "unbuttoned" than is Bach in

\* Forkel's "John Sebastian Bach." *Tr.* Sanford Terry.

some of his organ works. Even the Lutheran Catechism could not prevent cheerfulness from breaking in. As we have seen, his Clavierübung prelude on "These are the Holy Ten Commandments" is a gay little scherzo-fugue. He wrote such trifles with his wig off, and we should play them accordingly. Probably most of us who have played the short and picturesque Preludes for a good many years have hit on all kinds of delightful registration schemes. Few of them would look well on paper, and hardly any would be effective transferred to another organ and building. But surely that is the whole art of registration, resulting in something so racy and characteristic that it cannot be translated.

We may, then, apply all the modern ideas in registration to a good many of the Chorale Preludes, with this reservation: that in the case of trios or solo stop combinations we very rarely change it *en route*. Preludes of this type come into line with the Trio-Sonatas as a kind of chamber music, in which variety is obtained by the skilful employment of a few constituents, rather than by the addition of new ones from time to time.

The Toccatas, Preludes, and other non-fugal movements give us scope for plenty of variety, though we must be on our guard against restless change merely for its own sake. Just as we have to consider the construction of a fugue before deciding on its registration, so we must have an eye to the character and mood of the freer movements. Thus, the Toccata in F is sometimes made the victim of all kinds of tricky combinations, merely because the movement is

long and changes are easily made. But the music is so tremendously vigorous that it is ill-suited by delicate treatment. Schweitzer truly says it is most effective "when played simply with various nuances of the one *forte*." Speaking of the canon with which the Toccata opens, he adds, "It is to be hoped that some day the practice will cease of employing the cylinder Swell . . . instead of starting with a good *forte* and leaving the *crescendo* to the dramatic unfolding of the canon." This fault is not common in England because the cylinder Swell is rarely found, but the remark is worth quoting because it reminds us of what was pointed out above—that the growth of intensity in the music itself will often make the desired cumulative effect with little or no addition of tone.

The antiphony of two manuals is an effect that may be used freely. It is important, however, to distinguish between the cases where Bach evidently requires an Echo (as in the "Jig" fugue, and in certain of the Partitas), and those in which two well-contrasted *forte* manuals are called for. We have his own indications of the latter effect in the Dorian Toccata.

Now that Mixtures are again in favour, and are more delicately voiced, we might well follow the examples of French and German players and make use of them at other times than when playing full organ. In a lecture on "The Modern Organ: its Attractions and Dangers," delivered at Huddersfield in 1914, Dr. Alan Gray said :

"As for Mixtures, I have for many years had an instinctive feeling that Bach calls for them, and that a fugue subject given out on 8-ft. and 4-ft.

diapasons is so very dull that it is advisable to couple the Swell Mixture to the Great at the start of a fugue. I am therefore pleased to find that my ideas are confirmed by such an authority as Schweitzer, who recommends this course."

It seems to be supported, too, by Bach's use of the Mixture in this way in the Prelude on "Ein' feste Burg." But there are Mixtures *and* Mixtures, and those that can be used in combination with fairly quiet flue work are not yet common.

The registration suggested in the Widor-Schweitzer edition of Bach is far more noisy and complex than one would expect after reading Schweitzer's remarks on the subject in chap. xiv. of his book, though it must be added that the schemes are calculated for what the editors call "an ideal organ" for the purpose, *i.e.*, a kind of replica of the instrument of Bach's day. Fugues are usually started with foundation stops, reeds, and mixtures. There are numerous changes of stops, tone being built up and reduced stop by stop. Soloing of the subject is freely indulged in, sometimes by means of the pedals taking over a manual part through the coupler. A typical case occurs in the F major Fugue, where the alto entry beginning in bar 128 (six bars before the pedal brings on the second subject) is soloed, the pedal playing the tenor. As the pedal stops would not be used at such points, some quick changes are necessitated by such "faking." But it must be remembered that the editors frankly state that their suggestions "can be carried out, in general, only with the aid of an assistant for drawing or retiring the stops at the proper place."

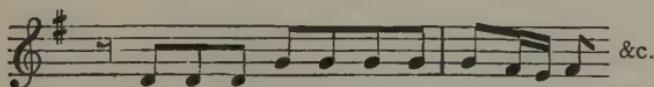
As something is happening every half-dozen bars or so, the experience would be a worrying one for all concerned.

The directions for the registering of a single work sometimes fill two or three wide columns, and a perusal of any one of them is sufficient to make us wearily decide on a simple scheme.

## XIII.—PHRASING.

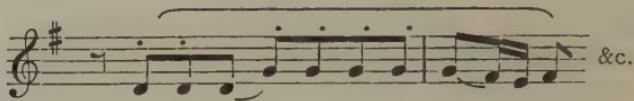
In considering the phrasing of Bach's organ music we cannot ignore the presence of the string idiom, especially in the Trio-Sonatas and other works obviously written under the influence of Italian chamber music. The dead-level *legato* that was once regarded as the first and last requirement in organ-playing has now gone, but not before it had been the cause of Bach's acquiring the reputation for dulness and dryness that he is only just losing.

Too many players, however, still keep their fingers glued to the keyboard in playing Bach. They seem reluctant to release repeated notes, with the result that some spirited subjects reach the ear in a stagnant form. It is hardly possible to overdo the detachment of repeated notes in such subjects as :

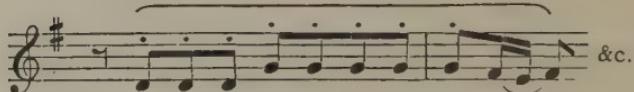


especially in resonant buildings. It should be observed, however, that the last note of such a

series should be as a rule tied to its successor, otherwise the phrasing is wrong, thus :



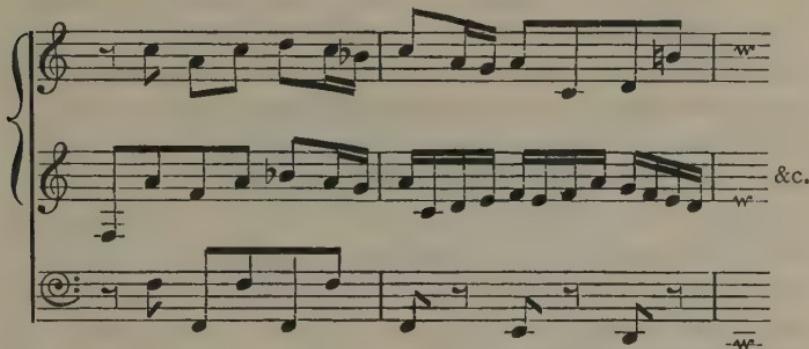
not :



The phrasing of bravura passages is usually indicated by Bach's division of the hands, shown by the grouping. We may be tempted to play such passages, or large portions of them, with one hand, but it is a safe rule to stick to the original grouping. Fugue subjects should be phrased uniformly throughout the movement. Complex sub-divisions of the subject into motives, suggested by some modern German editors, are often impracticable save in the simplest passages, so there is good reason for not being over-subtle.

In buildings of considerable resonance, pedal passages will gain from a liberal use of *mezzostaccato*. The effect to the hearer will be a *legato*, whereas a *legato* at the console too often becomes a muddle in the nave. When the pedal part consists of a series of detached notes it is best played with a *pizzicato* effect, or even *quasitimpani*, if we have a pedal stop of the right prompt-speaking and definite character. An ordinary passage may by this simple means be made arresting. Repeated octave leaps should be detached, otherwise they are apt to reach the ear as a tame bass. The Trio-Sonatas abound in

effects of this kind—passages that suggest the bass of a string band rather than that of the organ. Here are a couple of bars from the Sonata in C, showing both repeated and detached notes :



The greater part of the bass of this long movement consists of detached and octave-leaping quavers, and we must aim at giving it the life and point it would receive at the hands of good string players.

The very fact of Bach's organ-music being so continuous in its flow makes punctuation of supreme importance. Marches and dance tunes carry their phrasing in their rhythm, but these long streams of intertwined melody, played moreover on an instrument devoid of accent, are very much at the mercy of the performer. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that wrong phrasing is better than none—indeed, there are so many possible and effective treatments that a bad grouping can hardly be found, save by a hopelessly stupid player. For example, there is only one entirely wrong way of delivering the subject of the Great G minor Fugue—an unbroken *legato*. But there are more right ways than can be quoted.

"The more we play Bach's works," says Schweitzer, "the slower we take the *tempo*." The statement does not apply to English organists. The French and German pace for Bach is slower than ours—especially the German. National character comes out even in so small a thing. The French insist on clarity, the Germans must have time to dot every *i* and cross every *t*, and the English, in music as in everything else, prefer ideas served up in the rough, or taken for granted rather than logically unfolded. We have earned a reputation for "muddling through" in politics, business, sport, and art because of our good-tempered pooh-poohing of detail. But after all we do muddle *through*, and in this matter of pace in playing Bach we are surely right in the main. The speed of music, like the life it reflects, has quickened a good deal since Bach's day. What was brilliant then is staid now. If Bach intended a piece to sound fiery and brilliant—as he certainly did in many cases—our business is to make it so. The only limit we need consider in the *bravura* works is that enjoined by the necessity for maintaining clarity in the polyphonic passages. In a general way the pace settles itself. If it is effective it is good. This is the only practical and commonsense test, because conditions vary so much that the pace that is right for one church may be wrong for another. No performer has so little call for the metronome as the organist, and none has more need of gumption.

Perhaps there is one exception to the demand for clearness. In most cadenza-like passages it is probable that Bach's intention is harmonic rather than melodic. A good deal of modern

figuration depends for its effect not so much upon our hearing every note, as upon the harmonic basis being clearly defined. This is possible only when the pace is quick. We must not spoil Bach's cadenzas by sacrificing the fabric to the note. People who object on the ground that they cannot see the trees for the wood, must be reminded that in art, musical no less than pictorial, it is sometimes the wood as a whole that we want to see, even if it be only in a roughish kind of way. Meticulous attention to detail sometimes ends in our not seeing the wood for the trees. These *bravura* passages are nothing if not fiery. We do not want to hear them as we hear a delicate bit of embellishment of Chopin. They are not strings of pearls, but dashing episodes, put in either by way of contrast to the preceding polyphony, or to give the player a chance of display. Sometimes they have considerable emotional significance, generally of the fiercely impatient kind. We must look at each in relation to its context, and interpret it accordingly. Such passages should rarely be played in strict time. They are best started with some deliberation, gathering impetus as they approach their climax—or climaxes, for sometimes there are secondary ones which must be fittingly led up to and quitted. The close of some of these cadenzas can be made very dramatic. For a general principle as to the registration of such passages we may go to the orchestra. How would they be scored? Usually for wood-wind and full strings minus the double-bass. This gives brilliance, power, and pace without muddle, and if we apply the principle to the organ we have our powerful reeds and heavy stops in reserve for

the massive chords that usually follow a cadenza. But here as in almost every detail in the performance of Bach's organ works, the player must decide in accordance with his instrument and building. A slavish carrying out of the suggestions in text-books may end in a mere travesty of Bach. On the other hand, if we diligently experiment, sometimes listening to a friend at the console, we may throw the books overboard; our playing can hardly fail to be as full of life and interest as the music itself.

## XIV.—CODA.

Bach's organ music is but a modest part of his enormous output. Of the forty-six volumes issued by the Bach-Gesellschaft only two and portions of two others are devoted to works for the organ. Yet he has somehow come to be regarded as the special pride and patron of the organist. Rightly or wrongly, we feel that we are akin to John Sebastian in a way that no pianist or violinist can ever be. How is this? We dare not claim that he wrote better for our instrument than for any other. On the contrary, the organ fugues, both in quantity and quality, are if anything slightly below those for the clavichord, partly because the standard of the organ fugues as a whole suffers from the largish proportion of immature work. If the chorale preludes had not been almost entirely neglected until recent years, we might have felt that we above all know Bach because in this part of his organ music he expressed himself with an intimacy for which a parallel is found more easily in literature than in music.

Perhaps the explanation is in the fact that, in this country at all events, his revival was largely brought about by Wesley, Jacob, and other organists. As a result, despite the present and growing popularity of the choral works, concertos, suites, and the "Forty-eight," we still think of Bach as an organ composer who made occasional

and brilliantly successful dashes into other fields of creative work. We are wrong, of course, and we know we are wrong, but the feeling persists, and we need be in no hurry to cure ourselves. The world goes round because of such illogical affections.

But much is due from disciples who are specially favoured, or who merely imagine themselves to be so. Is our playing of Bach's organ music on a level with that of the clavier works in concert-halls, studios, or even in the good average musical household? Are we helping our pupils and audiences to see Bach whole—the poet and mystic of the chorale preludes, and the polished chamber musician of the trio-sonatas, as well as the writer of energetic toccatas, preludes, and fugues? Or do we limit ourselves to a handful of brilliant and popular works, as an investment yielding a handsome and quick return in technique and reputation?

So much of Bach's organ music is now transcribed for orchestra, pianoforte duet, and pianoforte solo, that it is safe from oblivion without the aid of the organist. These transcriptions, however, increase his responsibilities in another way. The music may be effective in its new guise, but it depends as a whole so much upon the great scale and sustaining powers of the organ that it can never be heard at its best through any other medium. More than ever before, the public ought to be able to count on hearing the finest of it played to perfection on the instrument for which it was written. With brilliant performances of the transcriptions in their ears people will expect much of the organist, and his

casual and not too clean delivery of a well-worn fugue will no longer serve.

The history of music is a record, at once melancholy and cheering, of the futility of appraising composers till they have been not merely dead but neglected for at least a generation. Survival is a test, but a good stretch of it may be due to tradition and convention. Revival is a much more severe ordeal, especially when the works have to be painfully collected and collated, and given to the public in dribs and drabs during a half century, as was the case with Bach's. Never was there so astonishing a revival. Obscure in his life, though acclaimed by the limited circle to whom his gifts were known, Bach was so forgotten by the next generation that it seemed almost as if he and his music had never been. Yet to-day there is no composer whose future is more assured.

And this future lies in no narrow range. No composer is indispensable in so many fields as Bach. He provides a solid part of the repertory of violinist, violoncellist, flautist, pianist, choralist, organist, orchestra, and church choir. He is one of the few creators who have worked with equal success in the monumental and the miniature. Who but he has so often and so successfully touched the extreme limits of mood and size? Many composers might have written the little dances in the suites; a few might have produced the Passions and the B minor Mass. Bach did both, and so easily as to make the feat appear a matter of course.

Varied as were Bach's activities, he no doubt had his favourite sphere. Bearing in mind the

obstacles he met with in the performance of his more difficult concerted works, choral and instrumental, we may be sure that he was happiest when, as performer and composer combined, he depended upon himself alone. The organ, with its ample resources, must have given him a sense of power and freedom he found nowhere else. Forkel tells us he would improvise organ music for two hours at a time—a long string of movements on a single theme. In the organ-loft, then, he won his greatest personal triumphs and expressed his deepest feelings, and we may well believe that, given his choice, it is there, above all, he would have his memory kept green.

THE END.

## APPENDIX.

A COLLATION OF THE NOVELLO, PETERS,  
AND AUGENER EDITIONS OF THE ORGAN  
WORKS.

Novello: Book I. EIGHT SHORT PRELUDES AND FUGUES.

Page	2.	Prelude and Fugue in C major (P. bk. 247 p. 48; A. vol. 4 p. 467).
5.	Do.	D minor ( <i>ib.</i> 51; <i>ib.</i> 472).
8.	Do.	E minor ( <i>ib.</i> 54; <i>ib.</i> 478).
11.	Do.	F major ( <i>ib.</i> 57; <i>ib.</i> 482).
14.	Do.	G major ( <i>ib.</i> 60; <i>ib.</i> 487).
17.	Do.	G minor ( <i>ib.</i> 63; <i>ib.</i> 492).
20.	Do.	A minor ( <i>ib.</i> 66; <i>ib.</i> 497).
23.	Do.	B flat major ( <i>ib.</i> 69; <i>ib.</i> 502).

Novello: Book II. PRELUDES, FUGUES, AND TRIO.

Page	26.	Allabreve in D major (P. bk. 247 p. 72; A. vol. 3 p. 435).
30.	Prelude in G major ( <i>ib.</i> 82; A. vol. 5 p. 664.)	
34.	Canzona in D minor (P. bk. 243 p. 54; A. vol. 3 p. 441).	
38.	Fugue (The Giant) in D minor (P. bk. 246 p. 78; A. vol. 6 p. 796).	
41.	Fugue in G minor (P. bk. 247 p. 85; A. vol. 10 p. 1384).	
44.	Prelude and Fugue (the Short) in E minor (P. bk. 242 p. 88; A. vol. 1 p. 39).	
48.	Prelude and Fugue in C minor (P. bk. 243 p. 32; <i>ib.</i> 124).	
54.	Trio in D minor ( <i>ib.</i> 72; A. vol. 5 p. 688.)	

## Novello: Book III. FANTASIAS, PRELUDES, AND FUGUES.

- Page 57. Fantasia in C minor (5 parts) (P. bk. 243 p. 70; A. vol. 3 p. 448).  
 60. Fugue in B minor (on a theme by Corelli) (*ib.* 46; *ib.* 422).  
 64. Prelude and Fugue in A major (P. bk. 241 p. 14; A. vol. 2 p. 187).  
 " 70. Do. do. C major (*ib.* 2; A. vol. 1 p. 1).  
 76. Fantasia and Fugue in C minor (P. bk. 242 p. 55; A. vol. 2 p. 215).  
 84. Fugue (the "Short") in G minor (P. bk. 243 p. 42; A. vol. 3 p. 406).

## Novello: Book IV. SONATAS OR TRIOS FOR TWO MANUALS AND PEDAL.

- Page 88. Sonata in E flat major (P. bk. 240 p. 2; A. vol. 4 p. 506).  
 97. Do. C minor (*ib.* 11; *ib.* 520).  
 110. Do. D minor (*ib.* 24; *ib.* 538).

## Novello: Book V. SONATAS OR TRIOS FOR TWO MANUALS AND PEDAL (IV.-VI.).

- Page 124. Sonata in E minor (P. bk. 240 p. 36; A. vol. 4 p. 556).  
 134. Do. C major (*ib.* 46; *ib.* 570).  
 151. Do. G major (*ib.* 63; *ib.* 594).

## Novello: Book VI. TOCCATA, PRELUDES, AND FUGUES.

- Page 2. Toccata and Fugue in D minor (P. bk. 243 p. 24; A. vol. 2 p. 271).  
 10. Prelude and Fugue in D major (*ib.* 14; A. vol. 1 p. 22).  
 21. Do. do. F minor (P. bk. 241 p. 29; *ib.* 45).  
 28. Do. do. E flat major (P. bk. 242 p. 2; *ib.* 133).

## Novello: Book VII. PRELUDES AND FUGUES.

- Page 42. Prelude and Fugue (the Great) in A minor (P. bk. 241 p. 24; A. vol. 1 p. 83).  
 52. Do. do. do. B minor (*ib.* 78; A. vol. 2 p. 198).  
 64. Do. do. do. C minor (*ib.* 36; *ib.* 168).  
 " 74. Prelude and Fugue in C major (P. bk. 243 p. 2; *ib.* 157).  
 80. Do. do. G major (*ib.* 8; A. vol. 1 p. 112).

## Novello: Book VIII. PRELUDES AND FUGUES.

- / Page 88. Prelude and Fugue in C major (P. bk. 242 p. 62; A. vol. 9 p. 1185, and, in E, vol. 2 p. 288).  
 98. Do. do. (the Great) in E minor (P. bk. 241 p. 64; A. vol. 2, p. 227).

Novello : Book VIII. (*contd.*).

- Page 112. Prelude and Fugue in G major (*ib.* 7; A. vol. 1 p. 56).  
 120. Do. G minor (P. bk. 242 p. 48; *ib.* 9).  
 127. Fantasia and Fugue (the Great) in G minor (P. bk. 241 p. 20; A. vol. 2 p. 254).

## Novello : Book IX. PRELUDES AND FUGUES.

- Page 137. Toccata and Fugue (the Great) in C major (P. bk. 242 p. 72; A. vol. 2 p. 306).  
 150. Prelude and Fugue in D minor (*ib.* 42; A. vol. 1 p. 100).  
 156. Do. (the Great) in C major (P. bk. 241 p. 46; *ib.* 69).  
 168. Fantasia in G major (P. bk. 243 p. 58; A. vol. 3 p. 453).  
 176. Toccata and Fugue (the Great) in F major (P. bk. 242 p. 16; *ib.* 331).

## Novello : Book X. TOCCATA, PRELUDES, AND FUGUES.

- Page 196. Toccata and Fugue (the Dorian) in D minor (P. bk. 242 p. 30; A. vol. 3 p. 360).  
 208. Prelude and Fugue in A minor (*ib.* 84; A. vol. 5 p. 612).  
 214. Passacaglia in C minor (P. bk. 240 p. 75; A. vol. 3 p. 382).  
 230. Fugue in C minor (P. bk. 243 p. 36; *ib.* 412).  
 238. Prelude in A minor (*ib.* 68; A. vol. 5 p. 624).

## Novello : Book XI. FOUR CONCERTOS [after Antonio Vivaldi].

- Page 1. Concerto in G major (P. bk. 247 p. 2; A. vol. 5 p. 692).  
 10. Do. A minor (*ib.* 10; *ib.* 793).  
 24. Do. C major (*ib.* 22; *ib.* 720).  
 49. Do. C major (*ib.* 44; *ib.* 752).

## Novello : Book XII. PRELUDES, FANTASIAS, FUGUES, TRIOS, ETC.

- Page 55. Fugue in G major (P. bk. 2067 p. 18; A. vol. 5 p. 618).  
 60. Fantasia and Fugue in A minor (*ib.* 3; *ib.* 640).  
 71. Fantasia with Imitation in B minor (P. bk. 215 p. 41;  
       *ib.* 656).  
 75. Fantasia in G major (P. bk. 2067 p. 25; *ib.* p. 631).  
 83. Fugue in D major (P. bk. 2067 p. 22; A. vol. 9 p. 1168).  
 86. Do. G major (*ib.* 12; A. vol. 5 p. 669).  
 91. Prelude in C major (P. bk. 247 p. 77; *ib.* 687).  
 92. Fantasia in C major (*ib.* 78; *ib.* p. 661).  
 94. Prelude in C major (*ib.* 76; A. vol. 9 p. 1103).  
 95. Fugue in C minor (P. bk. 243 p. 50; A. vol. 3 p. 428).  
 100. Fugue in C major (P. bk. 247 p. 80; A. vol. 9 p. 1105).  
 102. Pastorale in F major (P. bk. 240 p. 86; A. vol. 5 p. 676).  
 108. Trio in C minor (P. bk. 2067 p. 30; A. vol. 9 p. 1173).  
 112. Aria in F major (*ib.* 34; *ib.* p. 1178).

[Novello's Books XIII. and XIV. (Choral Preludes and Variations)  
are superseded by Books XV.-XIX.]

Novello: Book XV. ORGELBÜCHLEIN (LITTLE ORGAN BOOK).

- Page 3. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (P. bk. 244 p. 44;  
A. vol. 8 p. 966).  
 5. Gott durch deine Güte, *or*, Gottes Sohn ist Kommen  
(*ib.* 20; *ib.* 988).  
 9. Herr Christ, der ein'ge Gottes-Sohn, *or*, Herr Gott, nun  
sei gepreiset (*ib.* 24; *ib.* 996).  
 11. Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott (*ib.* 40; *ib.* 975).  
 13. Puer natus in Bethlehem (*ib.* 50; *ib.* 997).  
 15. Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ (*ib.* 19; *ib.* 1026).  
 18. Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich (*ib.* 13; *ib.* 1048).  
 21. Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (*ib.* 53; *ib.* 963).  
 23. Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schaar (*ib.* 54; *ib.* 1024).  
 26. In dulci jubilo (*ib.* 38; *ib.* 977).  
 29. Lobt Gott, ihr Christen, allzugleich (*ib.* 42; *ib.* 967).  
 31. Jesu, meine Freude (*ib.* 34; *ib.* 969).  
 33. Christum wir sollen loben schon (*ib.* 8; *ib.* 1014).  
 36. Wir Christenleut' (*ib.* 58; *ib.* 1000).  
 39. Helft mir Gottes Güte preisen (*ib.* 23; *ib.* 1004).  
 43. Das alte Jahr vergangen ist (*ib.* 12; *ib.* 1037).  
 45. In dir ist Freude (*ib.* 36; *ib.* 971).  
 50. Mit Fried' und Freud' ich fahr' dahin (*ib.* 42; *ib.* 998).  
 53. Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf (*ib.* 26; *ib.* 1030).  
 58. O Lamm Gottes unschuldig (*ib.* 46; *ib.* 992).  
 61. Christe, du Lamm Gottes (*ib.* 3; *ib.* 1022).  
 64. Christus, der uns selig macht (*ib.* 10; *ib.* 1008).  
 67. Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stand (*ib.* 11; *ib.* 990).  
 69. O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross (*ib.* 48; *ib.* 1034).  
 73. Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ (*ib.* 59; *ib.* 965).  
 76. Hilf, Gott, dass mir's gelinge (*ib.* 32; *ib.* 1045).  
 79. Christ lag in Todesbanden (*ib.* 7; *ib.* 991).  
 81. Jesus Christus, unser Heiland (*ib.* 34; *ib.* 971).  
 83. Christ ist erstanden (*ib.* 4; *ib.* 1016).  
 89. Erstanden ist der heil'ge Christ (P. bk. 244 p. 16;  
*ib.* 981).  
 91. Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag (*ib.* 17; *ib.* 1038).  
 94. Heut' triumphiret Gottes Sohn (*ib.* 30; *ib.* 983).  
 97. Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist (P. bk. 246  
p. 86; A. vol. 10 p. 1343).  
 99. Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend' (P. bk. 244  
p. 28; *ib.* 979).  
 101. Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier (*ib.* 40; *ib.* 1033).  
 103. Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot' (*ib.* 14; *ib.* 994).  
 105. Vater unser im Himmelreich (*ib.* 52; A. vol. 8 p. 964).  
 107. Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt (*ib.* 15; *ib.* 986).

Novello: Book XV. (*contd.*).

- Page 109. Es ist das Heil uns kommen her (*ib.* 18; *ib.* 1006).  
 111. Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ (*ib.* 33; *ib.* 1042).  
 113. In dich hab' ich gehoffet, Herr (*ib.* 35; *ib.* 982).  
 115. Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein (*ib.* 55; *ib.* 1044).  
 117. Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten (*ib.* 57; *ib.* 1012).  
 119. Alle Menschen müssen sterben (*ib.* 2; *ib.* 985).  
 121. Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig (*ib.* 2; *ib.* 976).

Novello: Book XVI. THE SIX "SCHÜBLER" CHORALE PRELUDES  
AND THE "CLAVIERÜBUNG," PART III.

(a) The Schübler Preludes.



### (b) The "Clavierübung," Part III.

## 310 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

Novello: Book XVI. (b) The 'Clavierübung,' Part III. *contd.*

- |      |     |  |                     |
|------|-----|--|---------------------|
| Page | 67. | Christ unser Herr, zum Jordan kam ( <i>ib.</i> 49;               | A. vol. 8 p. 1058). |
|      | 68. | Aus tiefer Noth schrei' ich zu dir ( <i>ib.</i> 36; A. vol. 7    | p. 868).            |
|      | 72. | Do. do. ( <i>ib.</i> 38; A. vol. 8                               | p. 1069).           |
|      | 74. | Jesus Christus unser Heiland ( <i>ib.</i> 82; A. vol. 7 p. 876). |                     |
|      | 80. | Do. do. ( <i>ib.</i> 92; A. vol. 8 p. 1060).                     |                     |
|      | 83. | Fugue in E flat major (P. bk. 242 p. 10; A. vol. 1 p. 133).      |                     |

Novello: Book XVII. THE EIGHTEEN CHORALE PRELUDES.

- |      |     |  |                          |
|------|-----|--|--------------------------|
| Page | 1.  | Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott (P. bk. 246 p. 4;               |                          |
|      |     |  | A. vol. 6 p. 759).       |
|      | 10. | Do. do. do. ( <i>ib.</i> 10; <i>ib.</i> 801).                    |                          |
|      | 18. | An Wasserflüssen Babylon (P. bk. 245 p. 34; A. vol. 7            | p. 859).                 |
|      | 22. | Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele (P. bk. 246 p. 50;                  |                          |
|      |     |  | A. vol. 6 p. 786).       |
|      | 26. | Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend' (P. bk. 245                  |                          |
|      |     |  | p. 70; <i>ib.</i> 835).  |
|      | 32. | O Lamm Gottes unschuldig (P. bk. 246 p. 45; <i>ib.</i> 768).     |                          |
|      | 40. | Nun danket alle Gott ( <i>ib.</i> 34; <i>ib.</i> 782).           |                          |
|      | 43. | Von Gott will ich nicht lassen ( <i>ib.</i> 70; <i>ib.</i> 828). |                          |
|      | 46. | Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland ( <i>ib.</i> 38; A. vol. 7 p. 934). |                          |
|      | 49. | Do. do. do. ( <i>ib.</i> 40; A. vol. 10 p. 1410).                |                          |
|      | 52. | Do. do. do. ( <i>ib.</i> 42; A. vol. 6 p. 809).                  |                          |
|      | 56. | Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr' (P. bk. 245 p. 26;              |                          |
|      |     |  | A. vol. 7 p. 872).       |
|      | 60. | Do. do. do. ( <i>ib.</i> 22; A. vol. 6 p. 790).                  |                          |
|      | 66. | Do. do. do. ( <i>ib.</i> 17; A. vol. 7 p. 892).                  |                          |
|      | 74. | Jesus Christus, unser Heiland, der von uns ( <i>ib.</i> 87;      | <i>ib.</i> 900).         |
|      | 79. | Do. do. do. ( <i>ib.</i> 90;                                     |                          |
|      |     |  | A. vol. 10 p. 1415).     |
|      | 82. | Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist (P. bk. 246                 |                          |
|      |     |  | p. 2; A. vol. 6 p. 814). |
|      | 85. | Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein, <i>or,</i> Vor deinen          |                          |
|      |     | Thron tret' ich allhier ( <i>ib.</i> 74; A. vol. 10 p. 1336).    |                          |

Novello: Book XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS CHORALE PRELUDES  
(Part I.).

- |      |    |   |  |
|------|----|---|--|
| Page | 1. | Ach Gott und Herr (P. bk. 2067 p. 38; A. vol. 9 p. 1114). |  |
|      | 2. | Do. do. (P. bk. 245 p. 3; A. vol. 8 p. 1002).             |  |
|      | 3. | Do. do. (P. bk. 2067 p. 39; A. vol. 9 p. 1136).           |  |

Novello : Book XVIII. Part I. (*contd.*).

Novello: Book XVIII. Part I. (*contd.*).

70. Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier (*ib.* 105; A. vol. 10 p. 1356).  
 71. Do. do. (*ib.* 105; *ib.* 1354).  
 72. Do. do. (*ib.* 39; A. vol. 8 p. 968).  
 73. Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott (*ib.* 41; *ib.* 1077).  
 74. Lobt Gott, ihr Christen, allzugleich (*ib.* 106; not in A.).  
 75. Meine Seele erhebet den Herren (Magnificat)  
       (P. bk. 246 p. 29; A. vol. 9 p. 1162).  
 80. Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein, *or,* Es ist  
       gewisslich an der Zeit (*ib.* 36; A. vol. 10 p. 1370).  
 83. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (P. bk. 244 p. 45;  
       A. vol. 8 p. 1086).

Novello: Book XIX. MISCELLANEOUS CHORALE PRELUDES  
(PART II.) AND VARIATIONS.

## (a) PRELUDES.

- Page 2. Valet will ich dir geben (P. bk. 246 p. 53;  
       A. vol. 7 p. 863).  
 7. Do. do. (*ib.* 56; A. vol. 6 p. 846).  
 12. Vater unser im Himmelreich (*ib.* 66; A. vol. 8 p. 1010).  
 14. Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (*ib.* 67; *ib.* 1075).  
 16. Do. do. do. (*ib.* 68;  
       A. vol. 9, p. 1125).  
 19. Do. do. do. (P. bk. 244  
       p. 106; *ib.* 1134).  
 21. Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten (*ib.* 56;  
       A. vol. 8 p. 1091).  
 22. Do. do. do. (*ib.* 56; *ib.* 1090).  
 23. Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern (not in P.;  
       A. vol. 7 p. 910).  
 28. Wir Christenleut' (P. bk. 2067 p. 52; A. vol. 9 p. 1129).  
 30. Wir glauben All' an einen Gott, Vater (P. bk. 246  
       p. 82; A. vol. 6 p. 817).  
 32. Wo soll ich fliehen hin (P. bk. 2067 p. 48;  
       A. vol. 7 p. 916).

## (b) VARIATIONS.

36. Christ, der du bist der helle Tag (P. bk. 244 p. 60;  
       A. vol. 9 p. 1201).  
 44. O Gott, du frommer Gott (P. bk. 244 p. 68; *ib.* 1210).  
 55. Sei gegrünset, Jesu güting (*ib.* 76; *ib.* 1222).  
 73. Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (*ib.* 92;  
       A. vol. 10, p. 1288).

Novello : Book XIX. (b) VARIATIONS (*contd.*).

The Peters volumes 244, 245, 246, 2067 contain movements excluded from the Novello edition, viz.:—

Book 244: the figured Choral (Herr Christ, der ein'ge Gottes-Sohn) on p. 107, and the Variant texts on pp. 108-112.

Book 245: the Variant texts on pp. 96-113.

Book 246: the Variant texts on pp. 86-103 (excepting the B Version of "Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, heiliger Geist").

Book 2067: the Choral Preludes on pp. 39 (Auf meinen lieben Gott), 40 (Wir glauben all' an einen Gott), 42 (Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod), 44 (Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein), 54 (Aus der Tiefe ruf' ich), 56 (Christ lag in Todesbanden), and the " Kleines harmonisches Labyrinth " on p. 16.

The Augener volumes contain a number of Pieces and Variants not in the Novello and Peters editions.



## INDEX.

PAGE	PAGE
<b>Arnstadt, Specification of</b>	
Organ at ... ... 14	
<b>Bach, As transcriber</b> ... 247	
— Concert (Recital)	
Tours ... ... 51	
— Italian organ music,	
Influence of, on ... 74	
— Italian string music,	
Influence of, on 38, 67, 251	
— Recital at Cassel 52, 160	
— Resigns his post at	
Weimar ... ... 111	
— Violin, Influence of,	
on ... ... 250	
— Walks to Lübeck... 21	
Böhm, Georg—Influence	
on the young Bach ... 10	
Buxtehude—Fugue in F 57	
— Fugue-subjects ... 17	
— Passacaglia and	
Chaconnes ... 90	
<b>Canon, Expressive power</b>	
of ... ... 124	
<b>Canzona in D minor</b> 74, 78, 288	
<b>Chorale Partitas — Ach,</b>	
was soll ich Sünder	
machen? ... ... 2	
<b>Chorale Partitas (<i>contd.</i>)</b>	
— Allein Gott in der	
Höh' sei Ehr' ... ... 2	
— Christ, der du bist	
der helle Tag ... ... 4	
— Herr Christ, der	
Ein'ge Gottessohn ... ... 4	
— O Gott, du frommer	
Gott ... ... ... 3	
— Sei gegrüsset Jesu	
gütig ... ... ... 8	
<b>Chorale Preludes — Ach</b>	
bleib' bei uns ... ... 205	
— Ach Gott und Herr 257	
— Alle Menschen müs-	
sen sterben ... ... 197	
— Allein Gott ("Bici-	
nium") ... ... ... 116	
Do. (Clavierübung set-	
tings) ... ... ... 199	
Do. (Coloratura Pre-	
lude in A) ... ... 212	
Do. (Fugue) ... ... 274	
Do. (Trio in A) ... ... 195	
Do. An Wasserflüs-	
sen Babylon (Double	
pedal) ... ... ... 269	
Do. (Four-part ver-	
sion) ... ... ... 199	
	275

# 316 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

PAGE	PAGE
<b>Chorale Preludes (<i>contd.</i>).</b>	
<p>— Aus tiefer Noth (Manual) ... ... 220</p> <p>Do. (Six-part) ... 218</p> <p>— Christ lag in Todes- banden ... ... 11</p> <p>— Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam ... 217</p> <p>— Christe, du Lamm Gottes ... ... 129</p> <p>— Christus, der uns selig macht ... ... 130</p> <p>— Christum wir sollen loben schon (Fughetta) Do. (Little Organ Bk.) 197 138</p> <p>— Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stand ... ... 115</p> <p>— Das alte Jahr ver- gangen ist ... 114, 137</p> <p>— Das Jesulein ... 195</p> <p>— Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich (Fug- hetta) ... ... 197</p> <p>Do. (Little Organ Bk.) 119</p> <p>— Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot' (Clavier- übung, five-part) ... 213</p> <p>Do. (do. manual) 213, 291</p> <p>Do. (Little Organ Bk.) 122</p> <p>— Durch Adam's Fall (Fugue) ... ... 195</p> <p>Do. (Little Organ Bk.) 119</p> <p>— Ein' feste Burg ... 196</p> <p>— Erbarm' dich mein ... 12</p> <p>— Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag ... ... 119</p> <p>— Erstanden ist der heil'ge Christ ... ... 121</p> <p>— Gelobet seist du ... 197</p> <p>— Gottes Sohn ist kommen ... ... 124</p> <p>— Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf ... ... ... 135</p> <p>— Herr Gott, nun sei gepreisit ... ... 115</p>	<p><b>Chorale Preludes (<i>contd.</i>).</b></p> <p>— Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend (Col- oratura Prelude) ... 194</p> <p>Do. (Trio) ... ... 267</p> <p>— Herzlich thut mich verlangen ... ... 194</p> <p>— Heut triumphiret Gottes Sohn ... ... 132</p> <p>— Hilf, Gott, dass mir's gelinge ... ... ... 130</p> <p>— Ich hab' mein' Sach' Gott' heimgestellt ... 197</p> <p>— In dich hab' ich gehoffet, Herr ... ... 195</p> <p>— In dulci jubilo ... 193</p> <p>Do. (Little Organ Bk.) 125</p> <p>— Jesu, meine Freude (Fantasia) ... ... 197</p> <p>Do. (Little Organ Bk.) 140</p> <p>— Jesus Christus unser Heiland (Clavier- übung) ... ... ... 221</p> <p>Do. Eighteen Chorale Preludes) ... ... 279</p> <p>— Komm, Gott, Schöp- fer, heiliger Geist ... 267</p> <p>— Komm, heiliger Geist, Herr Gott (Eighteen Chorale Preludes) ... 280</p> <p>Do. (Fantasia) ... 264</p> <p>— Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist ... ... ... 211</p> <p>— Liebster Jesu ... 193</p> <p>Do. (Little Organ (Bk.) 131</p> <p>— Lobe den Herrn ... 259</p> <p>— Magnificat (Fugue on "Tonus Peregrin- us") ... ... ... 195</p> <p>— Mit 'Freid' und Freud' ich fahr' dahin ... 118</p> <p>— Nun danket alle Gott ... ... ... 280</p> <p>— Nun freut euch ... ... 198</p> <p>— Nun komm', der Heiden Heiland (Colo- ratura Prelude) ... 276</p>

# INDEX

317

PAGE	PAGE
Chorale Preludes ( <i>contd.</i> ). — Nun Komm', der Heiden Heiland (Fugue) ...	265
Do. (Trio) ... ...	270
— O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig (Eighteen Chorale Preludes) ...	277
Do. (Little Organ (Bk.) ... 114, 128	
— O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross ...	136
— Puer Natus in Beth- lehem ... ... 134, 141	
— Schmücke dich ...	271
— Tonus Peregrinus ...	256
Do. (Fugue on) ...	195
— Valet will ich der geben ... ...	201
— Vater unser (Clavier- übung) ... ... 211, 215	
Do. (Short) ... ...	203
— Vom Himmel hoch (Canonic variations) ...	206
Do. (Fughetta in C, à 3) ... ...	203
Do. (Fugue in C) ...	203
Do. (Prelude in D) ...	204
— Vomm Himmel kam der Engel Schaar ...	138
— Von Gott will ich nicht lassen ...	277
— Vor deinen Thron tret' ich allhier (Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein) ... ...	281
— Wachet auf! ...	252
— Wenn wir in höch- sten Nöthen sein) ...	137
— Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten (A minor, for manuals) ...	20
Do. (Schübeler set) ...	255
— Wie schön leuchet der Morgenstern ...	20
— Wir Christenleut' ...	205
— Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ ...	133
Chorale Preludes ( <i>contd.</i> ). — Wir glauben all' ...	205
Do. ("Giant" Fugue) ...	214
— Wo soll ich fliehen hin? (G minor) ...	205
Do. (Schübeler set) ...	255
Clavierübung ...	209-224
— Scheme of ...	210
Eight Short Preludes and Fugues ... ...	49
Eleven Chorale Pre- ludes ... ...	263-282
Fantasia with Imitation	190
Fantasias—C minor (à 5)	82
— G major (early) ...	23
— G major (with Grave) ... ...	23
Fantasias and Fugues—	
A minor ... ...	22
— C minor ... ...	79
— G minor ... ...	164
Forkel—Praise of the Trio-Sonatas ...	189
— on Bach's registra- tion ... ...	290
Fugues—A minor (Early)	22
— Alla Breve in D ...	75
— B minor ("Corelli")	75
— C minor (Early; now ascribed to Eman- uel) ... ...	19
— C minor (Double- fugue) ... ...	75, 232
— D major ... ...	23
— D minor ("Fiddle" Fugue) ... ...	260, 289
— G major (Early) ...	23
— G major ("Jig" Fugue) ... ...	35
— G minor ("Short")	39,
— Registration of ...	286
Gray, Dr. Alan, on Mix- tures ... ...	292

# 318 THE ORGAN WORKS OF BACH

	PAGE		PAGE
Little Organ Book	107	Preludes and Fugues ( <i>contd.</i> )	
Mixtures, Use of...	292	— E minor ("Wedge")	82,
Pace	298	— Eight short...	232, 288
Parry on Bach as a violinist	250	— F minor ...	49
— Bach's susceptibility to words	178	— G major (Early Weimar)	86
— "Sleepers, wake!"	253	— G major (Late Weimar)	48
— The Dorian Toccata	98	— G minor (Early Weimar)	151, 176
— The Little Organ Book	140	— ... ... ...	70
— The Trio-Sonatas	173, 188	Raison, André — Contrasted manuals, Use of	36
— Vom Himmel hoch, Canonic Variations	206	— "Passacaille" theme borrowed by	
Passacaglia and Fugue	88	Bach ... ... ...	90
Pastorale in F	190	Registration, Forkel on	
Phrasing, Influence of string idiom on	295	Bach's ... ... ...	290
— of bravura passages	296	— of Chorale Preludes	290
— of cadenzas	298	— of Fugues ... ...	286
— of repeated notes	295	— of Toccatas, Preludes, &c. ... ...	291
Pirro on "Schmücke dich"	271	— of Trio-Sonatas	186, 291
— The Toccata in F...	161	Schübler Chorale Preludes ... ... ...	252
— The Toccata and Fugue in D minor	64	Schweitzer — on the modern organ as medium for Bach ...	284
— The "Wedge" Fugue subject	236	— on the influence of the violin on Bach's works ... ... ...	251
Preludes—A minor (Early)	34	— on the technical value of the Trio-Sonatas ... ... ...	188
— C major (Early)	23	— on the registration of the Passacaglia ...	93
— G major (Early)	33	Spitta on Bach's registration of the "Ein' Feste Burg" Prelude	196
Preludes and Fugues—		— the A major Fugue	105
— A major	88, 103, 288, 289	— the Chorale Partitas	10
— A minor	144	— the Early Prelude and Fugue in C ...	32
— B minor ("Great")	46,	— the Prelude and Fugue in D major ...	56
	242, 251		
— C major (Early)	31		
— C major (Leipsic)	238		
— C major (Weimar)	84,		
	176, 288		
— C minor (Early)	15		
— C minor (Weimar)	147		
— D major	52, 160		
— E flat	209, 225		
— E minor ("Little")	39, 43		

## INDEX

319

PAGE	PAGE
Statham, Mr. Heathcote, on the Bach Society and the Early Toccata in C ... ... ... 30	Toccatas and Fugues ( <i>contd.</i> ). — C major ... ... 65
— Registration of the closing bars of the Toccata and Fugue in D minor ... ... 64	— D minor ... ... 60
Terry, Prof. Sanford, on the plan of the "Little Organ Book" ... ... 112	— D minor (Dorian) ... 98
Toccata as a form ... 98	— F major 144, 154, 178, 288, 291, 293
— a Muffat scheme ... 98	Tremulant, A good word for the ... ... ... 14
Toccatas and Fugues— C (or E) major ... 16	Trios—C minor ... ... 191
	— D minor ... ... 190
	Trio-Sonatas ... 173-190
	Vivaldi Concertos ... 249
	— Influence of, on Eight Short Preludes... 50





## Date Due

MAY 6 '59			
12/6/59			
JUN 6 '60			
4/24/60			
MAY 11 '60			
MAY 23 '60			
OCT 16 '67			
OCT 30 '67			
NOV 27 '67			
MAY 13 '70			
MAY 27 '70			
DEC 18 '79			
NOV 22 '80			
MAR 31 '86			
APR 21 '86			
 (B)	PRINTED	IN U. S. A.	

15133

783.1  
G75

15133

783.1  
G75

Grace, Harvey

AUTHOR

Organ works of Bach, The

TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED
4/19	E. Duffeeberg	APR 9
B. OCT 23 1951	H. B. E.	OCT 24
B. OCT 31 1951	engin	NOV 1
6 NOV 1951 8	E. Duffeeberg	27

The organ works of Bach,

783.1 G75

36847000129272



Graes, Harvey,  
Neack College

20407